From Gutters to Greensward: Constructing Healthy Childhood in the Late-Victorian and Edwardian Public Park

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

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Abstract

The late-Victorian and Edwardian period marked the zenith of urban park construction, spurred on in part by concerns about the physical and moral health of those living in the city. For the middle-class reformers at the time, public parks offered a space through which the unique and complex social issues of the era could be addressed and resolved. The public park was unique in that it made children visible on an unprecedented scale. Their role was fixed at the very heart of discourses on health; of the body, the mind, the nation, and the empire. This research explores these discussions of identity, and how that was negotiated by children in the very specific landscape of the public park.

Previous work on the concept of childhood during this period has focused on adult interpretations of the figure of the child, steeped in nostalgia and imbued with an adult fear and hope for the future. I argue that this ignores the lived experience of the child, and denies them agency in creating their own identity. This thesis uses a methodology inspired by current research in the emerging interdisciplinary field of childhood studies and drawing on the insights of material cultures studies to address this. The park space offers a unique opportunity to study lived experiences of childhood, designed as it was for use by the general public, with children firmly in mind. This work addresses the gaps in our knowledge and understanding of public urban parks in relation to children and explores the idea of a late-Victorian and Edwardian childhood identity as a complex and nuanced phenomenon.

Throughout my thesis I use three parks as my primary case studies: Saltwell Park in Gateshead, Whitworth Park in Manchester, and Greenhead Park in Huddersfield. All three parks are situated in towns in the north of England that experienced dramatic change as a result of the industrial revolution and so reflect the anxieties present nationwide as a result of this change. By way of contrast I also consider parks in London and elsewhere to understand the uniqueness of these parks but also how they were situated within broader national debates over children and childhood.

My investigation is broken down into three major thematic areas, each of which seeking to explore and analyse a particular aspect of childhood identity. The first of the three themes is the ‘Natural Child’. I explore the notion that children were thought of having a greater connection with, or affinity for, the natural world, and that they benefitted in particular from access to nature. The second area of research is the ‘Playful Child’. Here the idea that children were inherently playful, frivolous and could be shaped through correct play will be discussed. Finally, I investigate the ‘Empire Child’, exploring the notion of the child as the future of the Empire and the Nation, and the embodiment of concerns over racial superiority, military conquest and economic power.

Within each of these sections I examine the way that this idea is expressed in the prescriptive and other literature, before addressing the way in which these notions could be articulated in the park landscape. Significantly I also show how children engaged with, or rejected, notions of childhood identity, acknowledging that children were not just passively receiving instruction, but were actively involved in negotiating their own identities.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Sian Jones and Dr. Julie-Marie Strange. With their openness to exploring interdisciplinary approaches, they have inspired and guided my research and their unending dedication and support has been deeply appreciated. I am indebted to the Arts and Humanities Research Council who generously funded my research throughout my programme. A further thanks goes to my panel member Eleanor Casella who was invaluable in providing constructive feedback, as well as the other members of staff from the departments of Archaeology and History.

I was first directed into researching public parks through my involvement with the Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project which has contributed significantly to my knowledge and understanding of these fascinating places. I wish to thank the three project directors, Professor Sian Jones and Drs. Hannah Cobb and Melanie Giles for involving me in the project as Research Assistant in the first place, and for continuing to inspire me with your insights and approaches to the material culture of the space. The other project members have also given me opportunities to develop skills invaluable to my research and career and my thanks go to them also.

For aiding me with my research and for their guidance on the use of images I would like to thank the staff at the Tyne and Wear Archives, the Manchester Central Library, Kirklees Archive and Brent Council. The 1st Leith Boy’s Brigade Ex-Members Association and Bruce Anderson of Rusholme Archive have also generously given me permission to use images. The staff, students and volunteers who I excavated alongside on the Whitworth Park Project have my sincere gratitude for their willingness to share their time, enthusiasm and knowledge with me.

The postgraduate student body at the University of Manchester is filled with interesting, enthusiastic and generous people many of whom have contributed positively to my PhD experience. In particular I wish to thank my colleagues and friends Stephanie Duensing and Steven Leech for their encouragement, advice, support and friendship. Holly Smith and Rebecca Bell also deserve thanks for their positivity and kind words. My sister Elisa has provided me with excellent editing support as well as giving me endless encouragement throughout the process. My parents receive a special debt of thanks. They have inspired me in many different ways, from first instilling in me a love of reading and learning, to being themselves always willing to seek out the path less travelled. They have patiently supported me throughout my education and I am endlessly grateful. Finally thank you to Gary, who has maintained an unerring confidence in my abilities since day one, and who has been there every step of the way. For you all.
Preface

This thesis builds on work I began during my MA in Archaeology at the University of Manchester, investigating the late-Victorian park from a phenomenological perspective. My supervisor for that thesis, Professor Sian Jones, encouraged me to engage in an interdisciplinary way with sources, utilising my BA background in History. This alerted me to the lack of research done on children in the park and was something I was keen to address, particularly given the work I have done in the past teaching children.

Once I completed my MA I was invited to join the Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project as a Research Assistant. I spent a year gathering archival research on Whitworth Park before beginning my PhD which provided me with a fantastic foundation on which to build my research. I continued in my post for two further years during my PhD and by doing so I was able to interact materially with the past of Whitworth Park in a way which I would not have been able to had I not been part of the project. The project also provided me with a plethora of fantastic opportunities delivering talks and workshops to children as well as adults, and perhaps most notably, working alongside the team producing an exhibition at the Manchester Museum.

The insights which I have gained from members of the public, school children, and other academics have repeatedly articulated to me the broader significance of this research and has helped fuel my passion for the subject.
Chapter One

Introduction:
Gutters to Greensward

In June 2014, the Heritage Lottery Fund produced a report into the state of Britain’s public parks and green spaces entitled “Renaissance to risk?”¹ This paper suggests that while the nation’s parks are currently in a good state, thanks largely to the £620 million awarded to redevelopment projects by the HLF since 1996, they are at risk of slipping into the decline seen in the 1970s and 80s.² As a direct result of the HLF paper, support groups and individuals nationwide began setting up petitions and lobbying MP’s to safeguard budgets for parks in their 2015 election manifestos.³ While the outcome of this lobbying is as yet unknown, it is clear that funding Britain’s parks and green spaces is a sensitive political issue. The current park renaissance in the UK feels hard won and fragile. Even while some 34 million people regularly visit parks throughout the year and membership for friendship groups is increasing, the fear that these could be taken away from the people remains.⁴ The reasons behind this attitude are complex, yet the way in which parks came into being, the result of half a century’s lobbying, campaigning and acts of philanthropy by individuals and specific interest groups, is at least partly behind it. It is this legacy which the HLF and other interest groups are keen to acknowledge as a significant part of the UK’s heritage.

At the heart of the narrative over the heritage value of public parks and green spaces is their value to children. The HLF states for example that parks are ‘central to family life’, a space for our earliest memories to be formed.⁵ This sentiment echoes the way in which Victorian park campaigners sought to promote a vision of familial contentment in the park epitomized by the Victorian gentleman, his wife, and his children promenading on a Sunday.⁶ Children became a particular target for the reformers of the ‘Public Park Movement’ and many parks were declared to be for children, either by name or by statements made by the

¹ ‘State of UK Public Parks 2014: Renaissance to risk?’, Heritage Lottery Fund (2014) [accessed 14/05/15].
² ‘Renaissance to risk?’, p. 1.
³ See for example: Petition by National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces [accessed 14/05/2015]; ‘Manifesto’, Parks2015 [accessed 14/05/2015].
⁴ ‘Renaissance to risk?’, p. 3.
⁵ ‘Renaissance to risk?’, p. 11.
⁶ ‘Report from the Select Committee on Public Walks’ (1833), House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, Proquest (2006) [accessed 8/01/16]
founders.\(^7\) Parks were not only spaces where children could be part of idealistic family life, but rather children and in particular children’s health became central to the argument for urban green space. When describing his utopian city of health, Benjamin Richardson in 1875 wrote that ‘instead of the gutter, the poorest child has the garden; for the foul sight and smell of unwholesome garbage, he has flowers and greensward’.\(^8\) This represented the way in which access to green space and idealised notions of the child and childhood were deeply intertwined in the late-Victorian and Edwardian era.

This thesis looks at the unprecedented era of park building between 1880 and 1914, when more public parks were built than at any other time.\(^9\) These parks were inspired by the Royal Parks of London, which began opening to the public for the first time in 1835,\(^10\) as well as the few pioneering parks and botanical gardens opened from the 1840s onwards for use by the general public.\(^11\) Parks from the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras were nonetheless unique in their conception, design and use. Parks were deemed integral to the fabric of social life within the nation; no fewer than 27 parks were opened nationwide in celebration of Queen Victoria’s Jubillees in 1887 and 1897. Parks hosted national and local events such as Whit Walks, May Day and Midsummer fetes, as well as providing a public space for political rallies and non-conformist views, where these were allowed.\(^12\) Despite the above noted emphasis on children and parks both in the late-Victorian era and now, the role and experience of children in the parks has been neglected in academic scholarship.\(^13\) My thesis contends that experience of space and place is not only determined by class and gender, but also by notions of childhood identity.

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\(^7\) Whitworth Park, Manchester was named Whitworth ‘Children’s’ Park, see GML-GB127-MB23, 12/7/1889.
\(^10\) Regents Park was the first to open to the public in 1835, for two days a week.
\(^11\) Notable early examples include Victoria Park, London, 1845, Queen’s Park and Phillips Park, Manchester and Peel Park, Salford, 1846, Birkenhead Park, Birkenhead and Avenham Park, Preston, 1847.
\(^12\) Hyde Park is the most well known of these however Victoria Park, London and Glasgow Green were also closely associated with political rallies. See Hazel Conway, ‘Parks and People: The Social Functions’ in *The Regeneration of Public Parks*, ed. by Ken Fieldhouse and Jan Woudstra (London: E&FN Spon, 2000), pp. 9-20.
\(^13\) While it does not exclusively focus on public parks, the following article discusses the role of children in shaping urban design; Irene Maver, ‘Children and the Quest for Purity in the Nineteenth Century Scottish City’, *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, 33 (3) (1997), 801-824.
Recent work by literary theorist Marah Gubar has argued for a more nuanced look at the way the Victorians conceived of childhood identity, away from a simplistic model of the innocent child.\(^{14}\) While she is averse to rejecting wholeheartedly the notion of a ‘cult of the child’, as suggested by influential nineteenth-century literary theorist James R. Kincaid,\(^{15}\) she claims that we need to reconsider the way this ‘cult’ was articulated. Within her field of children’s fiction she argues for example that authors from the ‘Golden Age’, that is the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century, thought of the children they wrote about and of their child readers as ‘socially saturated beings, profoundly shaped by the culture, manners, and morals of their time’.\(^{16}\) In these stories children are at the mercy of ‘the pervasive and potentially coercive power of adult influence’ yet are conversely afforded varying levels of agency to ‘exploit and capitalize on the resources of adult culture’.\(^{17}\) I wish to explore this idea of a pluralistic and complex late-Victorian and Edwardian childhood identity as it was expressed and negotiated within the park space, utilising a methodology inspired by current research in the emerging interdisciplinary field of childhood studies and drawing on the insights of material cultures studies. I engage with ‘interpretive reproduction’ theory in order to understand and articulate the findings of this work, enabling me to maintain the focus on children’s experience.\(^{18}\) The park space offers a unique opportunity to study this phenomenon, designed as it was for use by the general public, with children firmly in mind. Park design provided a public space where children were exposed to adult conceived notions of childhood identity as well as adult ‘culture, manners, and morals’ in a way not possible in the classroom or at home.\(^{19}\) Within this space children actively negotiated their position, not only resisting, but also celebrating and enjoying their unique roles in special events and day to day activities.

This work has two main aims: (i) to address the gaps in our knowledge and understanding of public urban parks in relation to children; (ii) to explore the idea of a late-Victorian and Edwardian childhood identity as a complex and nuanced phenomenon. In doing so this


\(^{17}\) Gubar, p. 5.


\(^{19}\) Gubar, p. 4.
thesis will answer two closely intertwined questions. Firstly, to what extent did concepts of childhood influence the creation and landscape of public parks, and secondly, how did public parks as significant sites of childhood experience, shape the identities of late-Victorian and Edwardian children?

My investigation is broken down into three major areas, which each seek to explore and analyse a particular aspect of childhood identity. These three notions of childhood identity are drawn in part from the prescriptive literature on childrearing of the time, supported by an analysis of fictional literature, aimed both at adults and at children, which articulated these idealised notions of childhood identity. The topics which have been chosen appear throughout the wider academic literature on childhood and these will be discussed in Chapter Two where I will also identify how this thesis contributes to this body of work. The first of the three themes is the ‘Natural Child’, which will be discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter explores the notion that children were thought of having a greater connection with, or affinity for, the natural world, and that they benefitted in particular from access to nature. The second area of research, the focus of Chapter Four, is the ‘Playful Child’, where the idea that children were inherently playful, frivolous and could be shaped through correct play will be discussed. Finally, in Chapter Five, I look at the ‘Empire Child’, exploring the notion of the child as the future of the Empire and the Nation, and the embodiment of concerns over racial superiority, military conquest and economic power. Within each of these sections I examine the way that this idea is expressed in the prescriptive and other literature, before addressing the way in which these notions could be articulated in the landscape of the case study parks. The material culture of the park and the way in which the parks encouraged or discouraged children’s behaviour is analysed in relation to each of these themes. Wherever possible I also aim to explore how children may have engaged with, or rejected, these notions of childhood identity, acknowledging that children were not just passively receiving instruction, but were actively involved in negotiating their own identity.

It would have been possible to continue the investigation with further themes, in particular the idea of a ‘Consumer Child’, reflecting the work of historian Dennis Denisoff in highlighting how the nineteenth century child was bound up in consumer culture as
producer, consumer and product. This aspect of childhood culture and identity in the late-Victorian and Edwardian era is so significant that I felt it would have been impossible to separate this theme from the others. In addition to archival sources, this thesis relies on children’s material culture and fiction as sources, both aspects of an emerging market aimed at child consumers. It also draws on postcard images, the children on the front used in part to sell to adults an idealised vision of park spaces. In this way the notion of the consumer child runs throughout this work. A review and critique of the work done in this field will be provided in the next chapter where I will also set out my particular approach. Issues of class and gender, which are also central to the experience of late-Victorian and Edwardian Parks, are not possible to separate out into distinct areas of study and also run throughout this investigation.

1.1 Context of Study

In order to investigate the main aims of this thesis it is useful to look firstly at the context for public parks. Historian Heath Massey Schenker has highlighted how nineteenth century public parks are often referred to in contemporary sources as being some sort of ‘natural phenomenon’, as if large areas of green space occupying prime tracts of land in the centre of towns and cities were naturally occurring rather than decidedly man-made. Markedly different to the areas around them, these parks were *rus in urbe*, the illusion of nature in the city. The conspicuous contrasting of the country and city in English literature has been studied by Raymond Williams. He argues that at times of change, such as during the industrialisation and urbanisation of the nineteenth century, the juxtaposition of these two archetypes becomes more pronounced. The ideal of *rus in urbe* is a historically specific phenomenon and parks must be understood within this context, a fact which becomes blurred due to their continued significance in today’s society. Furthermore, this ideal, expressed through the creation of public parks, represented a particularly middle-class way of viewing the specific historical conditions of the nineteenth century. Schenker draws on

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the work of cultural critic Roland Barthes to argue that ‘parks have represented and
promoted certain bourgeois norms and values as though they were universal, including the
value of having a large patch of simulated nature in the city, the particular aesthetic
framework for appreciating that patch of nature, and the set of behaviours and social
interactions deemed appropriate in that setting’.23 This section will discuss the background
to the building of public parks with particular reference to these three points. Firstly I will
discuss the significance of the rural/urban dichotomy; secondly I will discuss park design;
and thirdly the sort of activity which was deemed appropriate within it. Throughout this, the
role children played within these discussions will be highlighted.

The population of Britain exploded during the nineteenth century due to a
combination of migration and increasing birth rates.24 Census figures suggest that in 1801
the population of England and Wales stood at around 8,893,000 while in 1911 this had
reached 36,070,000.25 Furthermore, the population was becoming increasingly urbanised
with approximately 33.8% of people living in urban spaces in 1801, growing to over 78.9% in
1911.26 Cities and towns expanded rapidly outwards, absorbing large areas of the
countryside in order to provide new homes for factory workers. Overcrowding, unplanned
housing and poor provision for sanitation led to a series of contagious disease outbreaks, the
most severe occurring between 1831 to 1833 and 1836 to 1842.27 The middle classes looked
to the countryside to provide an escape from the problems of the towns and cities. Historian
H.L. Malchow has noted how anti-urbanism, a legacy of Romantic pastoralism, remained a
significant influence over nineteenth century reformist thinking. He states that this thinking
underpinned ‘the whole mode of perception, the language and concepts, of much of
nineteenth century social thought’ made explicit in the writings and actions of John Ruskin,
William Morris, Octavia Hill and Walter Besant.28 The countryside offered a retreat from the
problems of the city. For idealists like Morris this was a spiritual retreat. For the newly rich,

23 Schenker, p. 8
97-124 (p. 97).
the retreat took a physical form as, funded by the revenues of industry and manufacturing, they purchased country estates and created stylised ‘natural’ landscapes of pastures, woodland, lakes and streams, assisted by the enclosures act. Art historian Anne Helmreich highlights how the garden became a ‘reassuring national image...both a solace and bulwark from the vagaries of modern capitalism and imperialism’. Journals such as Country Life, first published in 1897, articulated a ‘growing identification of the wealthy middle classes not with the city, the typical source of their money, but with the countryside’.

Concerns over urban conditions intensified due to a number of factors. The death of Prince Albert in 1861 from typhoid demonstrated that leaving the towns and cities was not enough to stay healthy. The middle classes were concerned not only by physical health but also by moral health, challenged, they felt, by overcrowding and the availability of alcohol and gambling within towns and cities. The perceived working-class vices of alcoholism, prostitution and violence sparked fears over the decline of the nation and a degeneracy of the race. As middle-class birth rates declined and working-class birth rates continued to rise, the vocal middle class grew increasingly concerned with the strength of their position in society. The series of uprisings and revolutions which swept through Europe in the year 1848, had led to anxieties over the same potentially occurring in Britain. As Malchow argues ‘idealization of the countryside...played a large role in determining the way literate and socially concerned Britons viewed the central social transformation of their century, the growth of towns’. The solution to the urban condition was therefore couched in these terms and it was the public park which offered nineteenth century reformers a ‘moral, intellectual and physical sanatorium for the ailments that unavoidably attack crowded communities’. In 1833 the Report from the Select Committee on Public Walks had suggested the public park as the healthy and moral alternative to the public house, ‘If

31 Helmreich, p. 10.
33 Jordan, p. 86.
34 Malchow, p. 98.
35 Charles Goodall, Illustrated Royal Handbook to Roundhay Park, Historical and Descriptive (Leeds: Goodall, 1872) p. iii.
deprived of any such resource, it is probable that their only escape from the narrow courts and alleys (in which so many of the humble classes reside) will be drinking-shops, where, in short-lived excitement they may forget their toil, but where they will waste the means of their families, and too often destroy their health’.36 The report also offered the park up as an aid to social cohesion and prosperity, suggesting that ‘a man walking out with his family among his neighbours of different ranks, will naturally be desirous to be properly clothed, and that his wife and children should be also...this desire duly directed and controlled, is found by experience to be of the most powerful effect in promoting Civilisation and exciting Industry’.37 As a cure to physical ailments reformers, like Octavia Hill in 1877, entreated those in power to ‘make the places inhabited by the poor healthy... let them have their open spaces where the fresh wind may blow over them and their clothes’.38 Parks were called ‘reservoirs of wholesome air’ the ‘lungs of a city’ and ‘ventilators for the slum’.39

The city was seen to cause challenges to urban working-class children in particular. Social reformer Samuel Smith claimed that a child brought up in urban poverty could not fail to become ‘unhealthy in body and depraved in mind and morals’.40 Poor urban children were perceived to have been corrupted by the effects of their enforced proximity to alcoholic and abusive parents, criminals, and disease as well as the impact of malnourishment and early childhood labour. The stunted growth of the child was seen to be both physical and moral, a result of being refused the proper length of time to develop in childhood. With ‘physical education’ seen as ‘a path to personal culture’41 the park became the space in which to reform and change the working-class child’s physical body by providing an alternative healthy space in which to exercise and develop their physique.42 In doing so the park aimed to simultaneously affect the child’s mind, creating a moralistic division between the urban spaces of the streets and the more rural space of the park.43 The provision of clean drinking

36 ‘Select Committee on Public Walks’, p. 9.
37 ‘Select Committee on Public Walks’, p. 9.
39 Malchow, p. 99.
42 See Jordan, p. 86.
water in the park underlined the contrast between the child’s exposure to contaminated water and alcohol at home and their healthy imbibing of pure, uncontaminated water in the park. The failure of plants to grow in the city was linked to the failure of urban children to grow,44 and the park, with its bright flowers and variety of plants represented a space for the physical and moral development of children which would counteract the ills of the city streets.

### 1.2 Park Creation and Design

Public parks have their architectural heritage in the country estates of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. As Helmreich has argued, the newly wealthy middle classes ‘worked to bind themselves to the land and to the English past, thus forging a new identity that obscured their relatively recent emergence in England’s class strata’.45 This led to an explosion of literature on garden design, such as influential landscape designer J.C. Loudon’s book *The Suburban Gardener, and Villa Companion* (1838) which detailed how to lay out the grounds of a suburban or small country house in accordance with the principles used in larger estates, aimed by the author at ‘those who know little of gardening and rural affairs’.46 Loudon was responsible for creating the ‘gardenesque’ style of landscape design, which overtook the ‘picturesque’ style in popularity in the early nineteenth century. Historian Hilary Taylor has drawn parallels between park design and landscape painting to suggest that by the mid-nineteenth century there was a move away from the celebration of ‘romantic or elemental nature’, towards landscapes with ‘people, society, signs of security and rational management.’47 Security, productivity and control became as important as the depiction of natural beauty. The ‘gardenesque’ was easier to achieve in smaller spaces than the

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45 Helmreich, p. 10.
46 John Claudius Loudon, *The Suburban Garden, and Villa Companion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014 [1838]). This book declares itself to be ‘for the use of ladies’. The role of women in gardening has been discussed by Helmreich, pp. 20-22.
47 Taylor, p. 204.
picturesque which may have further accounted for its popularity. Furthermore, these landscaped spaces were designed to be read and valued by the middle classes. The style relied on the viewer being able to recognise the hand of the designer, a visible signifier of wealth and taste. As Loudon contended, for ‘any creation to be recognised as a work of art’ it must ‘never be mistaken for a work of nature.’ In order to achieve this Loudon included flowerbeds, a conspicuous absence in the picturesque tradition, serpentine lakes and winding paths punctuated with dramatic planting, as well as zoned gardens which included Italianate, Rose and otherwise themed spaces. The artificial rendering of nature in Loudon’s designs is discussed further in Chapter 3.

By the 1840s a small number of public parks began to be built in what Malchow characterized as the first phase of park building in Britain. These were funded by private benevolence and public subscription, such as the three parks opened in Manchester and Salford on 22nd August 1846. Designed by Joshua Major, a firm advocate of Loudon’s style, these three parks were created in the gardenesque style with some modification to allow for the provision of children’s play and for promenading. The gardenesque was hugely significant in influencing the design of public parks. Artificial lakes, the spoil from which was taken to create islands and mounds within parks, flowerbeds, terraced walkways and oriental motifs (in parks this was most commonly expressed in built features rather than in planting) were all essential components of these park designs. Major himself wrote that park design should follow closely that of private gardens, allowing, however, for the provision of playgrounds and sports. By the 1860s, Malchow argues park building entered its second phase. Continued urban growth galvanized middle-class led organizations such as The Commons Preservation Society (established in 1865) to campaign for better provision of, and access to, green spaces, such as Berkhamsted Common. The building boom had also demonstrated how the proximity to an accessible park could increase property value, engaging those who had been unimpressed by purely philanthropic motives. Parks like Queens Park in Glasgow’s Southside and Alexandra Park in the East End, opened in areas

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49 Malchow, p. 99.
which at the time (1862 and 1868 respectively) were semi-rural with only a few detached houses nearby. Alexandra Park opened in 1868 in the exclusive suburb Whalley Range in Manchester, which was described as ‘a desirable estate for gentlemen and their families’. The Public Park Movement (as by this point it could be called) took on a political tone, attacking feudal landlords who were unwilling to offer up parts of their estates to be converted to public parks. Greenhead Park in Huddersfield, one of the case studies in this thesis, provides an example of this narrative and will be discussed in more detail below. Local corporations also gained the powers in 1860 to charge rates which would maintain and fund parks, and parks nationwide became increasingly termed ‘people’s parks’, again demonstrating how parks had become a mainstay of middle-class civic politics.

By the latter part of the century, continued growth meant that space to build public parks was often at a premium. The Disused Burial Grounds Act in 1884 prevented developers from building on these spaces, meaning many were instead converted into public parks. The introduction of working-hours legislation, the Bank Holidays Act of 1871 and in particular the Factory and Workshop Act of 1878, which limited work for women and children under 14, created a demand for leisure spaces for the working classes, particularly within the centre of town and cities. As Jordan points out, the size of urban parks often limited the features included within, whereas parks in provincial towns had greater scope in landscape design. Indeed pragmatism often played a significant role in park design. As early as 1852, landscape designer Charles Smith differentiated between the styles appropriate for large and small parks in his work *Parks and Pleasure Grounds*. He argued that in a park less than forty acres, the majority of space should be given over to ‘lawns, walks, shrubberies and moderate groups of trees’, rather than to woodland spaces or pasture. He suggested that points of interest should be included in the landscape design and that when in an urban environment these could be particularly ornate and showy, given that he felt the working classes to be less discerning with regards to design and taste. Museums and art galleries

53 Frank Clark, ‘Nineteenth-Century Public Parks from 1830’, *Garden History*, 1 (3) (1973), 34-36 (pp. 34-36).
54 St George’s Garden, London, which was converted in 1885 is a good example of this.
were deemed to be ideal focal points for parks, along with statues and drinking fountains, meanwhile for sport, gymnasiums were excellent points of interest for the young (separate for boys and girls), while bowling greens served the older patrons of the park. Park reformers placed great emphasis on designing parks with children and their specific needs in mind. However, where space was confined *The Gardener’s Chronicle* viewed the ‘flowers, the green sward, the trees and shrubs, the arrangement of colours, and the wild woodland’ to be the most important element of the public park, rather than playgrounds, open grassy fields or sporting facilities.\(^{56}\)

Leisure was not a new idea in the mid-nineteenth century, however historians have spoken of a revolution in free time that occurred during the period 1850-1870 partly as a result of a new period of prosperity. Beginning in the 1850s, an increased availability of cheap railway tickets, a growing literary press and reduced working hours, allowed for widespread access to a huge variety of new leisure pursuits which challenged narrow conceptions of leisure. While the middle classes were keen to participate in these new activities, doing so also proved a challenge to their self-identity. In order to cope with this, they began developing the notion of ‘rational recreation’ in order to imbue leisure time with moralistic and religious undertones.\(^ {57}\) Much of the work done in this field has centred on social control theory, arguing that the drive towards ‘rational recreation’ in the Victorian era was a way of imposing middle-class values surrounding leisure on to the working classes.\(^ {58}\) Historians such as Peter Bailey, who was instrumental in initiating this discussion, have argued that the working classes resisted this imposition and subverted leisure facilities to their own aims.\(^ {59}\) Others have argued, conversely, that the working classes actively sought to emulate models of respectability.\(^ {60}\) Respectability was a key issue for the urban middle classes, as argued by Simon Gunn in his work *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*

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\(^{56}\) W. W. Pettigrew, ‘Lecture to the Horticultural Club’, *Gardener’s Chronicle*, 48 (1910), 394.\(^ {p.394}\).

\(^{57}\) Peter Bailey, “‘A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures’: The Victorian Middle Class and the Problem of Leisure”, *Victorian Studies*, 21 (1) (1977), 7-28.\(^ {p. 20}\).


(2000). 61 While he neglects public parks in favour of other urban spaces such as gentleman’s clubs, churches and music venues, he nonetheless discusses the significance of the performance of respectability on civic culture and identity. Respectability became a byword for citizenship and was a necessary precondition for access to public and civic space.

Historian Nan H. Dreher also engages with this point in relation to the public park. Noting the confliction between accommodating all behaviours in the park as a way of encouraging people into the park, and using the park as a tool to ‘foster the development of the respectable citizen’, she argues that ‘citing the need to protect and inspire children as future citizens, many park goers advocated more “respectable” behaviour in public parks’. 62 With children once again at the heart of this message, as future citizens, park designers had to negotiate this issue, and the resulting park designs articulate the visions of those who had a say in designing them.

For working-class children at least, the nineteenth century saw an increasing distinction between structured time and free time. Laws enforcing education for children under 12 alongside a reduction in working hours for those between the ages of 13 and 18 meant that working-class children were forbidden to work outside of certain hours. While poorer children undoubtedly filled important domestic functions within the household, a reduction in the hours that women could work potentially freed children from full time domestic work. Toys, games and literature became increasingly commercialised and available to working-class, as well as middle-class, children, while music halls provided cheap entertainment for a penny. 63 Yet despite these developments in working-class leisure time, concern grew over the type of leisure enjoyed by working-class children. The music hall and the public house were subject to harsh critique by the middle classes, who claimed that ‘the moral tone was not conducive to wholesome and sober recreation’ and the pubs which also offered cheap and popular entertainment were ‘places of depravity which corrupted their visitors with alcohol and played a major part in the social misery of the age’. 64 Both venues were designed with adults in mind, but working-class parents often took their children with

them in order to provide family entertainment. In the case of music halls children regularly went unsupervised. Alongside the concerns over the unwholesome leisure that children were witnessing, were increasing concerns over the health and physical fitness of the young. Reformers had called attention to the diseases and handicaps suffered by urban poor children, such as rickets, poliomyelitis, malnourishment and injuries suffered from industrial work. While for middle-class and some working-class children, leisure time from the 1850s included trips to the country and the seaside, these opportunities remained out of reach for many of the very poor. For middle-class reformers, the park offered an opportunity to tackle the negative influences of alcohol, immoral entertainment and the lack of healthy physical activity. The growth of organised sports in public schools was thought to provide a model for what might be possible in the public park.

Public parks emerged out of a unique set of historical circumstances during the Victorian era. They represented a particularly middle-class way of viewing these historical circumstances and as such must be read with an understanding of this in mind. For the middle-class reformers of the time, public parks offered a space through which social issues of the time could be addressed and resolved. The campaign for public parks began in the 1830s yet reached its epoch during the period 1880-1914, having developed and gathered support throughout the century. Parks built in this era were subject to particular urban conditions, which had not always affected the earlier parks, and as such display the pragmatism in creating a suitable space for the performance of public leisure, whilst still articulating their heritage. Children were at the heart of the plans to build public parks, from the initial message, through the design process and in the activities promoted in them. The extent to which public parks intersected with particular notions of childhood identity will be explored in the following chapters, as well as the way in which children read and understood the park landscapes they used and how this then influenced their own self-identification and behaviour.

65 Kift, p. 73.
66 Lucy Bending draws attention towards the late-Victorian trend towards correcting poor growth through physical therapy. Lucy Bending, ‘From Stunted Child to “New Woman”: The Significance of Physical Growth in Late-Nineteenth Century Medicine and Fiction’, The Yearbook of English Studies, 32 (2002), 205-16 (p. 209).
1.3 Case Studies

The focus of this thesis is parks nationwide and throughout the work, parks are referred to in London, Edinburgh and the towns and cities in between. In order to research effectively however, it has been necessary to choose a small number of specific case studies to aid more in-depth analysis. The three major case study parks I have chosen are, in order of use, Saltwell Park in Gateshead, Whitworth Park in Manchester, and Greenhead Park in Huddersfield. Chapters three, four and five are each based around one of these case study parks, with other examples referred to in order to illustrate key points. This section will discuss the reasons for choosing these three parks and provide some historical background to them. The sheer number of parks opening nationwide during the period 1880 to 1914 meant that it was impossible to cover each and every one and the complexity of each park’s background and design determined that it would be better to focus on a small number of parks. Some geographical areas have already been the focus of a more detailed consideration of park landscapes. London in particular has been studied in some depth and so it was felt that it would not be necessary to include a full case study from there. Roundwood Park in Willesden, London however is used frequently to provide contrast and breadth to my investigation. Built in 1895 in a rapidly growing suburban area, Roundwood Park has many design features that illustrate themes discussed throughout this work. The Royal Parks of London appear occasionally in the fictional literature used as sources and are discussed primarily in relation to this. The three parks I have chosen to study are based in the North of England and so predominantly offer an insight into the intersection between parks and childhood in this region. While this is a limitation on this work, it hopefully offers a more considered appreciation of regional issues than would be possible had the scope been more diverse. All three parks are situated in towns that experienced dramatic change as a result of the industrial revolution and although they were by no means the only sort of


place to engage with the public park movement, they do reflect the anxieties present nationwide as a result of this change.

Figure 1.1: Map of the British Isles illustrating the location of case study parks. Drawn by author.
1.3.1 Saltwell Park, Gateshead [NZ 254, 610]

Saltwell Park is a nationally recognised public park in Gateshead, North-East England, around 55 acres in size. Formerly a small settlement built up around agriculture and coal mining, Gateshead changed beyond all recognition during the nineteenth century. Nationally important factories producing iron goods, telegraph cables, and locomotive parts attracted workers to the area. Between 1800 and 1901 the population of the district grew from just under 20,000 to over 175,000.\(^70\) Housing, which had been concentrated around the river banks in the north of the town, spread south towards areas that had previously been mainly agricultural land and large estates (see Appendix 1). Wealthy middle-class industrialists bought land in this area and created smaller estates and country houses. William Wailes, a leading manufacturer of stained glass, created Saltwellside Estate in 1856, the larger part of which was later to become the park. Still rural when purchased, by the time Saltwell Park was in use in 1876, the surrounding parcels of land had largely been sold to housing developers and by 1910 the park itself was surrounded by dense housing. The first public park in Gateshead was opened at Windmill Hills in 1861, a day marked by a public holiday and celebration.\(^71\) Almost immediately following this the Corporation of Gateshead began looking for a site to open a second park.\(^72\) Negotiations with a number of landowners proved fruitless until William Wailes offered his 55 acre estate to the Corporation for £35,000 in 1874. While cheaper than the alternatives, this still represented a considerable investment by the corporation, the equivalent of £2,767,100 today. The deal was secured in September 1875 and included a provision to lease Saltwell Towers, the large, elaborate Victorian mansion Wailes had built in 1871, back to him for the remainder of his lifetime (he died in 1881). Never officially opened, the Park was used by the public from late 1876, sometime before the works were completed.

On purchasing Saltwellside Estate in 1856, Wailes had quickly set out to landscape his grounds, employing the help of leading landscape designer Edward Kemp. A natural dene separated the estate into two parts. North of the dene was open field, while the area

\(^{71}\) ‘Transfer of the Windmill Hills to the public of Gateshead’, The Newcastle Courant, 22 November 1861, p. 2.
south of the dene, surrounding the new house Wailes had built in 1871, consisted of a number of clearly designed garden ‘rooms’. Kemp described the rose garden he created there in his book *How to Lay Out A Garden* (1858), suggesting that the landscaping took place soon after Wailes purchased the land. He wrote ‘certain places afford facilities for growing a collection of Roses by the sides of a walk…Such a walk I remember to have designed for William Wailes, Esq., of Saltwell, near Gateshead, where regular oblong beds were cut out in a band of grass on either side of the walk, and specimen standards occurred between the beds’.73 This rose walk led to a kitchen garden ‘through a wire arch mantled with climbing roses’.74 A geometrical garden and an arboretum also featured in the grounds, punctuated by the castellated belvedere walls and enclosed by a surrounding boundary wall.75 The dene itself was densely planted and intersected by small winding paths and rustic bridges. Kemp describes a similar space in his book, which may give a sense of the design for the dene. He writes ‘by the use of rocks, roots, and appropriate plants in many parts of the rugged banks, and by a profusion of Rhododendrons, Hollies, and other evergreens, a constant change of picturesque scene is attained.’ In this particular space in Keswick, Kemp added ‘three small rustic bridges over the stream’ not unlike the ones in the dene at Saltwell. Kemp’s involvement in designing the gardens helped to recommend Saltwell to the council and to the public during negotiations for the purchase of the estate. A letter published in the *Gateshead Observer* in 1874 noted how the grounds had been ‘laid out by one of the most eminent landscape gardeners in the country’.76 Despite this, the Corporation first approached local landscaper and ornithologist John Hancock to submit plans for the Park, however when he declined the job, on the grounds of being too busy, it was Kemp who was asked to design the rest of the park landscape.77

Kemp’s design left the area surrounding the house and stables largely untouched, albeit with the addition of four aviaries and a monkey house in order to house animals donated to the park.78 The fields to the north of the dene however, were slowly transformed over the years that followed according to Kemp’s plan (see Appendix 1).

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74 Kemp, p. 287.
75 Lang, p. 4.
76 ‘Letter to the editor’, *Gateshead Observer*, 10 October 1874, p. 3.
77 Lang, p. 6.
78 Lang, p. 7.
main entrance was located at the north-eastern corner; the highest point in the park which was set on a west-facing slope. This offered visitors a view down across the park and beyond to Ravensworth Castle Estate, giving the illusion of the park being much bigger than it was. The iron gates, designed by local firm Bainbridge and Crimson were set into stone pillars bearing the Gateshead coat of arms. From this access point, which was also the nearest point to the new developments being built around the park, the path sloped diagonally downwards. This path was flanked by dense planting of trees and bushes, with lawn and circular flowerbeds occupying the spaces immediately alongside the path. These were separated from the path by a section of low fencing. After approximately 50 meters the path split into two, each leading around the perimeter of the park. Turning left at this fork, the path partly folded back on itself, past a rustic octagonal shelter and then formed a straight pathway running parallel to the perimeter fence. This path was known as the promenade, broadwalk or terrace and was densely planted on either side. This promenade was regularly spaced by benches and the Almond Pavilion was situated midway along the path. At this point there was a break in the planting and it was possible to look across the large grassed area (known as the playing field from 1906, when grazing of the field by sheep was discontinued) towards the lake. The bandstand was originally placed directly below this view point before being moved to occupy the island in the lake in 1909. On the far end of the promenade, a further rustic octagonal shelter was placed. The path here headed downhill into the dene. On the right the path curved back around to the lake, past the original tennis courts and bowling greens. At the southernmost point of the lake stood the elaborate Indo-Chinese Pavilion. Purchased for £50 from Lyon’s Tea and Coffee Company, it had served as the tea house during the Newcastle Jubilee Exhibition in 1887 before being dismantled and rebuilt in Saltwell Park.79 The lake was not constructed until 1880 and took up some four acres of space in the western part of the park. To the south of the house and gardens lay a formal lawn area, intersected with paths and from 1905 the Boer War memorial.80

Saltwell Park’s expansive design and well documented history offers many avenues for investigation. The original Edward Kemp design has been closely followed throughout

the park’s history so that the landscape still retains a close resemblance to that of the period which this thesis discusses. Extensive archival material is available from the Tyne and Wear Archives facilitating in-depth research of the landscape, consisting mainly of park committee meeting minutes and images. The importance of the park within the town is such that many newspapers also reported activities which took place within the space. An almost £10 million restoration project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and the Gateshead Council was completed in 2005, focusing on restoring the park features to their Victorian state as well as improving accessibility and providing interpretation boards and a new cafe at Saltwell Towers. Partly as a result of this project, the park was named ‘Britain’s Best Park’ in 2005 and has received green flag awards annually from this point. The Park therefore remains a significant part of the urban landscape for those who live nearby. It is hoped that this work might add additional breadth to the understanding of the park experience for the current day users. The Park also has a personal significance for me given that this is the park where my grandmother played as a young girl in the 1920s and 30s. Visiting the space with her and listening to her share stories of the Park has helped to reinforce how significant these spaces could be for the children who got to play in them.

1.3.2 Whitworth Park, Manchester, [SJ 848, 958]

Whitworth Park is a small public park of approximately 18 acres, adjoining the Whitworth Art Gallery on Oxford Road, Manchester. At the time of opening the city of Manchester was lagging far behind many of its contemporaries in the provision of green space. Peel Park, Queen’s Park, and Phillips Park were opened in 1845, but from that early point, only a small number of parks had been opened before Whitworth in 1890. The area immediately surrounding Whitworth Park had changed dramatically throughout the 1800s, being predominantly rural until the latter part of the century when the cities expansion reached Rusholme and swiftly expanded beyond. The original plot of land for the park formed the grounds of Rusholme House, a large family property with accompanying lodge, built in 1810 by the Entwistle Family. The house was bought between 1871 and 1872 by Edmund

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81 These parks were in Manchester, Ardwick Green, 1876; Alexandra Park, 1868; Bradford Park, 1880s; Birchfield Park, 1888; and in Salford, Ordsall Park, 1876; Albert Park, 1877.
Crompton Potter, head of a local print works. Upon Potter’s death, in 1884, the trustee of his estate, Robert Dukinfield Darbishire, allowed for visitors, of any social background, to ramble over the parkland, which became known as Potter’s Field. In 1887, Joseph Whitworth died, leaving money for philanthropic works, and his legatees promptly purchased Rusholme House, its grounds, and the adjacent Grove House, previously owned by the well know Manchester family, the Hopkinsons. Darbishire (also one of Whitworth’s trustees) was the driving force behind the creation of the Park. A tribute paid to him in 1908 at the unveiling of the portraits of Whitworth and Darbishire stated that ‘there was hardly...a shrub or tree, or flower in the park that had been planted, or anything in the buildings or galleries that did not really bear the impress of Mr Darbishire’s own personality’.

In 1888 Rusholme House was demolished and a year later plans began for laying out the park. In 1890 the park was opened to the public along with the Whitworth Institute Art Gallery, however building works continued until 1894. In 1904 the park was leased to the Corporation for a period of 999 years. While the Park was created by funds from a private trust, the intention was always to create a public space. During the design process the Corporation was in close discussion with the Committee responsible for its creation. It is impossible to know from the available sources who provided the design for the Park, however, the Whitworth Committee felt it beneficial to send Manchester’s Park Superintendent Alfred Wilsher to London and to Brussels to study parks there in order to inform the design.

The park was laid out in a radial design surrounding a central circle, splitting the landscape into quadrants. The Park could be entered from any of the four corners, all of which had gates. The main entrance on the western side of the park was created in 1912, having previously been a smaller turnstile gate leading off from the grounds of the Whitworth Institute building (now the Whitworth Art Gallery). Elaborate gates were designed and the imposing entrance was further embellished with the addition of the

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83 Darbishire also went on to campaign for the creation of Platt Fields Park in 1908, see ‘Public and Platt Fields’, Manchester Courier, 2 August 1907, p. 6.
86 Heather Birchall, Healthy Bodies and Cultivated Minds (Unpublished Article, 2010).
Edward VII statue in 1913. The Whitworth Institute occupied a large section of the space in the north-eastern part of the park. To the north-west was an artificial mound created from the spoil from the lake, ‘hereafter to be clothed with trees, which, with its grassy slopes and sheltered nooks, will doubtless form attractive playgrounds for children’. Additional trees were planted along the northern and southern paths to form avenues, while other trees were planted more randomly in the other regions, leaving few large open grassy spaces. To the left of the main pathway leading from the entrance was the shelter, and near the central point leading away to the right was the 1895 statue of Christ Blessing the Children. The 14ft high porcelain statue, donated to ‘neighbours and children’ was created by sculptor George Tinworth who was profiled in children’s annual Chums the following year. The statue featured in a significant number of postcards and photographs taken of the park. As such the statue could be seen to suggest that Whitworth was ‘pre-eminently a children’s park’, supporting the intention of Darbishire who had donated the statue. Much of the western quadrant of the park was taken up with the lake surrounded by a curved pathway, allowing the visitor to view the lake from all angles. Benches at various points along this path facilitated visitors in viewing this space while an observatory on the western shore of the lake added an additional point of interest to the lakeside path. To the north of the lake stood the rustic style pavilion, a timber framed and glass structure with a curved front and a tiled roof. This building offered visitors views across the lake but also toward the bandstand. The rustic bandstand, a similar style to the pavilion stood to the north of the lake, flanked by a circle with trees. Hardstanding surrounded this space allowing for seats to be placed nearby for those watching bands performing.

In recent years Whitworth Park has benefitted from the regeneration work done by the Friends of Whitworth Park. They have restored paths and flowerbeds, and have engaged with biodiversity and art projects, earning the Park an annual Green Flag award since 2012. Unlike Saltwell Park and Greenhead Park, however, Whitworth Park has not been subject to major restoration work and so many of the Victorian structures are no longer present in the park. This makes the site particularly suitable for an archaeological investigation of the

87 ‘The Whitworth Park’, The Manchester Examiner and Times, 12 July 1890, p. 3.
89 ‘A Sculpture for Whitworth Park’, Manchester Courier, 6 May 1895, p. 5.
space. Whitworth Park has been the centre of the HLF funded Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project, spearheaded by the University of Manchester and the Friends of Whitworth Park.\textsuperscript{90} Three seasons of geophysical survey and excavation have revealed many of the long-hidden features of the park as well as significant artefacts which have shed light into past practices in the park.\textsuperscript{91} Activities conducted with current park users, from school children to retirees, has highlighted the significance of the space to those living and working in the area.\textsuperscript{92} As the Project Assistant, I have been able to excavate the landscape directly as well as investigate the way in which people continue to use and experience the park. As part of my work on the project I have created an archival database of the text and image sources on the Park. This has given me unparalleled familiarity with the material. Furthermore, archaeological excavation has been used extremely successfully by those investigating the lives of those who are missing from the historical record.\textsuperscript{93} This is perhaps particularly true of those living and working in the nineteenth-century urban city and who despite the vast historical record have not had their own unique experiences recorded.\textsuperscript{94} Children in the late-Victorian and Edwardian city were subject to greater scrutiny than ever before and aspects of their socio-economic background, medical conditions, and educational standard were detailed at length. However, the ephemera of childhood, such as that found at Whitworth Park, can reveal deeper insights into the everyday experience of children at the time.\textsuperscript{95}


\textsuperscript{91} Jones et al. ““Parklife” Past and Present’; Cobb et al. \textit{Archaeological Survey and Excavation Report}.


\textsuperscript{93} For example the archaeological investigation of institutional life. See Eleanor Conlin Casella, \textit{The Archaeology of Institutional Confinement} (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2007).

\textsuperscript{94} See Sarah Tarlow and Susie West. \textit{The Familiar Past?: Archaeologies of Later Historical Britain} (London: Routledge, 1999).

1.3.3 Greenhead Park, Huddersfield, [SE 135, 169]

Greenhead Park is around 30 acres in size and is situated close to the centre of Huddersfield. The park was campaigned for enthusiastically by local councilors from as early as 1869 however the unique civic set-up in the town (discussed in more depth in Chapter 5) meant that negotiations to secure the land continued until 1877. The park was finally opened with great support from the public in 1884. The park design made use of the naturally undulating site creating a series of interconnected spaces, overlapping paths complete with bridges, and viewing points. The formal entrance was complimented by a gothic style lodge house and formal planting. The wide main boulevard led up the hill to the elaborate belvedere topped with classical pillars and later the site of the grand war memorial from 1924. The belvedere was designed to facilitate multiple views across the landscape in all directions. Drawing heavily on Italianate design (indeed the word belvedere is a term derived from the Italian ‘bello vedere’ meaning a beautiful view) the classical terracing and pillars were echoed in the Italian formal gardens near the entrance and the border surrounding the bandstand area. The wooden raised bandstand was oriental in style and stood on a hillock next to one of the five park lakes. The bandstand could be viewed from the belvedere but also more closely from the viewing platform atop the roman style grotto next to the lake. Three further grottos, two of which were castellated and medieval in style were placed next to other lakes in the park. Rockeries decorated the sides of steep paths in the landscapes and a water feature depicting a biblical scene (discussed in more depth in Chapter 3) sat alongside one of these rockeries. Two stylistically very different drinking fountains donated to the park were also housed in this part of the park. On the higher ground a large playing field sloped down to the west, allowing views far beyond the park boundaries.

Major restoration works took place in 2010 funded by the HLF and overseen by the Friends of Greenhead Park. While the demographic of the surrounding area has changed significantly from the park’s first opening, the park is still well used and significant to the community who uses it. Since 2012 the Park has annually won the Green Flag award. Having been introduced to the park by Professor Siân Jones, my interest in it grew through acting as
a GTA on her annual field trip to the space for third year archaeology students. Approaching the space with critical eyes and hearing the students’ interpretations of the landscape and the material culture within it demonstrated to me just how culturally laden the park landscape was. The significance of the park to the local community, clearly articulated in the information panels throughout the Park, further demonstrated how parks are not just Victorian spaces adapted for today’s use, but are seen to be so valuable precisely because of this long heritage. The story of the park’s past adds value to today’s users and as such the opportunity to add greater insight into the past in turn gives my work greater meaning.

Malchow has noted how parks took on a political, anti-landlord, tone in the mid-century period, as ‘radical Liberals took up the attack on “feudal” landlords’.96 He situates this action primarily in the southeast of England.97 The background to the creation of Greenhead Park in Huddersfield however demonstrates that this politicized element of parks building was also experienced in the provincial North. By exploring the role Greenhead Park played in the construction of civic identities, predominantly in Chapter 5, this thesis contributes greater insight into the nationwide study of public parks.

1.4 Thesis Structure

Having addressed the scope of my thesis I will now set out the structure of the work. Chapter two will set out in detail my research questions and how they engage with the existing literature, which has informed my intervention. As part of this, I will discuss the interdisciplinary methodological approach I take, and the sources that support this. Following this are three research chapters each analyzing a particular theme of childhood identity. Chapter three focuses on the idea of a natural child, chapter four on a playful child, and chapter five on the child as part of the nation and empire. Chapter six forms the conclusion to this thesis.

96 Malchow, p. 101.
Chapter Two

Approaches to the Investigation

The children’s table is not usually an A-list destination. Denied the good china, seated at a wobbly folding table, placed out of earshot of the juicy adult gossip, the guests at the children’s table know that they occupy a marginal space.¹

Literary theorist Anna Mae Duane suggests that children are often situated on the periphery of society, denied, as historians Kate Darian-Smith and Carla Pascoe claim, ‘the same powers, privileges and responsibilities as “grown-ups”’.² Children’s experiences are ‘always influenced by the expectations of the adult world about how “children” and the period of “childhood” may be defined and understood’.³ It is perhaps for these reasons that children’s experiences of childhood have until recently been neglected by those who study the past.

While the scholarship of children and childhood has rapidly grown in the last twenty years, the focus has largely been on adult conceptions of childhood, education, and socialisation, in particular through the material culture produced for children and controlled by adults. Attempts to acknowledge and write about children’s own experiences have remained, like their subjects, on the periphery. Duane’s volume The Children’s Table (2013) highlights how ‘there can be an intense sense of freedom and creativity’ on the margins, which has begun to produce exciting and innovative work in this field.⁴ The majority of this work is interdisciplinary, drawing on theoretical approaches from history, archaeology, cultural geography, sociology and literature studies to name but a few. This thesis engages directly with this emerging body of work, utilising an interdisciplinary strategy to investigate the way in which children experienced and participated socially in the late-Victorian and Edwardian public park.

A review of the academic scholarship and the theoretical and methodological approaches utilised in this field has informed the particular direction of this thesis. The following chapter presents an overview and analysis of the work done to date in the field of childhood studies, with a particular focus on the recent work on children’s material culture.

³ Darian-Smith and Pascoe, p. 2.
⁴ Duane, p. 1.
This will be looked at alongside approaches to landscape, in particular those concerned with urban spaces. Throughout the review it will be noted how this thesis engages with ideas of childhood socialisation from a critical perspective. I seek to acknowledge the useful work done in childhood studies by anthropologists, sociologists and archaeologists, using theories of socialisation, in particular in highlighting the significance of children in the ‘production and reproduction of cultural knowledge’.

However, I would argue that this approach has tended to deny the agency of children. Discussion in this field has largely been on how children absorb cultural knowledge passed to them by adults, via books and toys for example. The way children themselves produce and reproduce meaning has largely been neglected. Some researchers have become aware of this issue. Archaeologist Liv Helga Dommasnes for example has questioned the lack of research on the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

While not denying that the development of cultural knowledge and skills is a significant part of childhood experience, socialisation approaches have lacked the complexity which can now be found in the emerging work on ‘interpretive reproduction’, pioneered by sociologist William A Corsaro.

As he explains

the term ‘interpretive’ captures innovative and creative aspects of children’s participation in society. Children produce and participate in their own unique peer cultures by creatively appropriating information from the adult world to address their own peer concerns. The term ‘reproductive’ captures the idea that children do not simply internalise society and culture, but also actively contribute to cultural production and change. The term also implies that children are, by their very participation in society, constrained by the existing social structure and by social reproduction.

This investigation is situated materially in the landscape of the public park, reflecting how, as historian Paula Fass puts it, the ‘material world is where childhood (as adults define it) and children (as real participants) intersect’.

Traditionally a material culture approach, defined

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7 Corsaro, The Sociology of Childhood


by art historian Jules David Prown in 1982, as ‘the study through artefacts of the beliefs – values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions – of a particular community or society at a given time’, has focused on adult cultures.\(^1\) Recent interdisciplinary work in the field of material culture studies has helped to broaden the way we investigate materiality and in doing so has created a framework for the exploration of marginal social groups.\(^1\) A consideration of agency has been especially significant to this project. Addressing material culture from an agency perspective, as argued for by influential anthropologists Alfred Gell and Bruno Latour, rather than a semiotic one, encourages us to reject predetermined definitions of active creators of meaning and passive receivers of it.\(^1\) Instead agency can be defined as ‘the socioculturally mediated capacity to act’. ‘Practice’ meanwhile ‘can be considered the action itself’.\(^1\) This definition grants agency to all social beings as well as to objects themselves, and children, often marginalised as social actors, can become, as Fass above has it, ‘real participants’.\(^1\) This approach compliments an interpretive reproduction stance in affording children agency in the production and reproduction of cultural meaning, while also recognising how they are, as social beings, inhibited by existing social structures.

As stated, it is not only people who act socially. In his work, *The Materiality of Stone* (2004), archaeologist Christopher Tilley encourages us to consider ‘things, places or landscapes...as agents which actively produce...identity’.\(^1\) Marta Gutman and Ning De Conick-Smith’s interdisciplinary edited volume *History, Space, and the Material Culture of Childhood* (2008) engages with this idea. The editors have utilised a broad definition of children’s material culture which encompasses ‘landscapes, buildings, rooms, furnishings,

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2. See Ian Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture* (London: Sage, 2007) pp.17-26 for a critical discussion of the origins of material culture studies as a way of classifying and marginalising social groups, particularly non-western cultures. He goes on to discuss how interdisciplinary approaches have created a series of tools and frameworks by which to investigate the way material culture mediates the everyday experiences of life, pp.26-29.
5. Fass, p.xi
clothes, toys, and many other objects and things that children wear and use’. It also includes ‘structures and objects not necessarily made for children but which children...have claimed and made an integral part of youth culture’. In defining the material culture of childhood so broadly, the editors of this volume engage with what they call ‘the duality of cultural landscapes’. That is both spaces ‘made for them [children] by adults and defined by adult values as well as the sites where children use space and design artifacts to develop what sociologists call “children’s own culture”’. Throughout this work children and their material world, in particular the architectural design of places they occupy, are shown to exert agency on one another in order to produce children’s culture.

This thesis engages in a similar interdisciplinary way with the specific material conditions of the public park, and the children who used them during the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras. It explores the creation and negotiation of pluralistic and complex childhood identities within the park which was a significant site within the child’s material world. It explores the way in which the public park acted as a means by which children explored and negotiated their social experience. In order to proceed, this chapter will discuss the way in which the academic field of childhood studies has developed, in order to demonstrate the way in which this thesis can be situated within this still growing discipline. I will then discuss in more depth the recent contributions to the study of children’s material culture which have helped to inform this work. In order to fully explore the significance of the case study parks as urban public spaces I will also discuss how theories of landscape have informed similar investigations. The major strength of this thesis is its broad interdisciplinary approach and I will draw together the findings of this chapter with a section exploring how I will apply these theories to my investigation; setting out my methodology for interpreting my diverse range of sources.

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17 Gutman and de Coninck-Smith, p. 3.
18 Gutman and de Coninck-Smith, p. 3.
2.1 Background to Research on Children and Childhood in the Past

Phillippe Ariès published his work *Centuries of Childhood* in 1960, sparking debate on the way academics have addressed childhood in their study of past societies. Ariès belonged to a school of historical thought which sought to move away from the history of significant figures, towards a consideration of the more everyday experiences of people living at a particular time. He argued that the modern world witnessed a transition in the way children were perceived, using medieval art in particular to suggest that children before this transition were viewed as small adults. By way of contrast he argued children after this cultural change were viewed sentimentally as being worthy of protection. He furthermore stated that the object of the family developed from being an ‘institution for the transmission of a name’ to an institution for the emotional, moral and spiritual education of children.

The major flaw in Ariès’ argument, and those who supported him, was in the implicit suggestion that the sentiments associated with children post-1600, were not there before this change. This point of view has been strongly criticised in later works. However it is perhaps useful to state that Ariès was not concerned with individual experiences so much as the social and cultural expressions of everyday occurrences. For him experience was to be studied abstractly, rather than specifically, and related this to childhood, rather than to children. While the specifics of his argument are now much maligned, Ariès nonetheless remains hugely significant in instigating the field of childhood studies within which this thesis is situated. His key contribution remains his assertion that the childhood experience, which is familiar to us in the present, is in fact a socially constructed and time-bound phenomenon, and as such has changed significantly over time.

The first wave of childhood studies emerged from the disciplines of History and Sociology in the 1970s and 80s. These broadly followed Ariès’ argument, focusing on changing conceptions of age and family role, predominantly in the early-modern period. Political scientist and founder of the *Journal of Psychohistory*, Lloyd deMause’s work *The History of Childhood* (1979) argues that the early-modern period saw the introduction of a

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20 Ariès, pp. 396-7.
more sentimental notion of child-rearing.\textsuperscript{21} Fellow psychologist and historian Edward Shorter went further arguing that ‘good mothering is an invention of modernization’.\textsuperscript{22} Lawrence Stone differed chronologically from many of his contemporaries, arguing that emotionless detached parenting continued into the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{23} For him, industrialisation was the catalyst for the creation of a child-centred family. Peter Laslett went so far as to suggest that this shift in familial experience was highly significant in the shaping of Western identity and perspective, in particular in the emergence of individualism.\textsuperscript{24} In subsequent decades this early work became subject to criticism, not least for the lack of engagement with records of individual children’s experiences. The scholars of the 1980s challenged the view that there was no concept of childhood in the medieval period and instead argued that parent-child relationships were subject to little change over time.\textsuperscript{25} Linda Pollock notably engaged with both these points of criticism in her book \textit{Forgotten Children} (1983). She used diaries and autobiographies from the period 1500-1700 to demonstrate that there was more continuity than change in the experiences of children.\textsuperscript{26} By the late 1980s and 90s, some scholars were engaging once again with this idea of a cultural concept of childhood, albeit while distancing themselves from the work of Ariès and his contemporaries. Hugh Cunningham called for childhood to be studied as a discursive tool of a particular society, arguing that through social representations of childhood, societies revealed their values, fears and concerns.\textsuperscript{27} His work draws on the philanthropic debates of the mid-nineteenth century reformers to illustrate this point, arguing that the true value of assessing

\textsuperscript{21} Lloyd deMause, \textit{The History of Childhood: The Untold Story of Child Abuse} (New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1979)
\textsuperscript{23} See also Michael Mitterraur and Reinhard Sieder, \textit{The European Family} (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982).
\textsuperscript{26} Linda Pollock, \textit{Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
\textsuperscript{27} Hugh Cunningham, \textit{The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century} (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Hugh Cunningham, \textit{Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500} (London: Longman, 1995).
representations of childhood is in its ability to provide a ‘mirror image of the ideal of adulthood’.  

The field of childhood studies continued to grow exponentially during the late 1990s and 2000s, unified through the acknowledgement that the investigation of the family and childhood could reveal insights into society in general. Encompassing works from literary theory, anthropology, archaeology, cultural geography, and architectural and art histories, as well the previously noted history and sociology, the breadth and diversity of these works was unprecedented. Many of these academics situated their investigations among previously marginalised groups such as the urban poor and those living and learning within institutions, reflecting the broader post-structuralist shift within the humanities. Childhood studies benefitted in particular from a feminist perspective which illuminated previously undocumented histories of childbirth, mid-wifery, infant mortality, childhood poverty, homelife and education, and in doing so provided a tremendous amount of detail for those studying children. One issue with this approach is that age and gender have become indelibly linked in the academic record. Gender studies have highlighted the way in which women had been neglected academically due to the assigning of domestic, non-economic, private roles to women, one of which has been the role of mother. A feminist interpretation, such as that expressed by archaeologist Grete Lillehammer, might note the positioning of children with women as being symbolic of a modern power structure, whereby those who are not adult male are feminised, disempowered and underprivileged. Despite a growing willingness to investigate marginal histories, academics during this time remained overwhelmingly silent on children’s experiences. Few explicit references were made to children beyond being viewed as what Lillehammer critically describes as ‘passive

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28 Cunningham, The Children of the Poor, p. 231; See also Colin Heywood, Childhood in Nineteenth Century France; Work, Health and Education among the ‘Classes Populaires’ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).


Since the widespread acceptance of a gendered perspective, women have been discussed with regards to their social, economic, and political contributions. Children however have yet to obtain the same, although those calling for an age perspective frequently cite the acceptance of gendered perspectives as a positive sign.

Most scholars have accepted that childhood is a cultural concept. However, children themselves have frequently been ignored as social agents, viewed instead as passive objects of attempts made by adults to control and educate them. Since the late 1980s there has been a persistent call for academics to not only acknowledge the presence of children individually and separate from women, but also to look to interpret their material culture.

As archaeologist Andrew Chamberlain notes, ‘children contribute to the [material] record, whether or not we are competent to recognise them’. Despite a willingness to engage with children’s material culture among a growing group of academics, children have until recently been discussed primarily in connection with the presence of toys or miniature versions of adult tools, or alternatively as an unknowable distorting factor in the otherwise interpretable past. Once again this reflects a perspective which has denied childhood agency and views children as being apart from society.

2.2 Current Approaches in Childhood Studies and Material Culture

The study of childhood in the past has since the early 2000s emerged as a discipline almost unto itself. Two organisations have helped to promote this approach. The international Society for the History of Childhood and Youth (SHCY) set up in 2001 and the British Society

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for the Study of Childhood in the Past (SSCIP) established in 2007. Both of these societies aim to foster an interdisciplinary conversation in childhood studies and to free the topic from disciplinary constraints. One result of this approach has been a growth in the investigation of the materiality of childhood. Analysis of the material culture of the past has been a successful tool for understanding the cultural heritage of those who have left little documentary trace.\textsuperscript{38} Archaeologists have been quick to recognise its potential in investigating working-class neighbourhoods and the industrial and domestic archaeology of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{39} However, this is not without problems when considering children’s material culture. Sharon Brookshaw confronts these issues in her investigation of the archaeology of childhood in a museum setting.

Children represent an interesting case in terms of material culture, as although much of the material world they interact with is made deliberately, purposefully and is reflective of the culture from which it originates, the objects we most commonly associate with this group were not made or controlled directly by its members, but rather are imposed on it by another group: adults.\textsuperscript{40}

Much of the material culture we associate with children directly, such as toys, children’s clothes, nursery furniture, is produced and bought for children by adults. Historian Carla Pascoe argues that these objects could therefore be thought more representative of ‘adult perceptions and expectations’ than of childhood realities.\textsuperscript{41} Early considerations of childhood material culture within archaeology incorporated this perception into their work, utilising theories of socialisation to investigate children’s material culture as part of a process by which children learn and internalise cultural norms.\textsuperscript{42} More recently this has been subject to criticism within the discipline. Many would now agree that socialisation is undoubtedly a ‘significant element of children’s lives’ however to limit our investigation to this approach is problematic.\textsuperscript{43} Anthropologist Margorie Goodwin argues that socialisation focuses too much

\textsuperscript{38} Darian-Smith and Pascoe, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{39} V. Crewe and D.M. Hadley, “Uncle Tom Was There, In Crockery”: Material Culture and a Victorian Working-Class Childhood’ in Childhood in the Past, 6 (2) (2013), 89-90.
on what children will become, rather than considering who and what they are.\textsuperscript{44} As her colleague Enid Schildkrout states this ‘trivialized childhood as a social status’.\textsuperscript{45} Instead academics have been keen to move towards an understanding of children as producers of social meaning.

The investigation of children’s material culture is complicated by the fact that children occupy the same material world as adults and many of the objects that children use and are significant to them, we would recognise primarily as part of adult material culture. For this reason Brookshaw has argued for the separation of the terms ‘material culture of childhood’ and ‘material culture of children’.\textsuperscript{46} Archaeologist Eleanor Casella’s work at Alderley Edge has embraced this ambiguity and demonstrated how children repurpose adult material culture for their own use.\textsuperscript{47} Utilising the work of fellow archaeologist Jane Eva Baxter, she argues that children engage with the materiality of landscapes, outside of those spaces designed specifically for them within the home, and in doing so impose upon them their own meaning and experiences.\textsuperscript{48} Fass has called for a broader definition of children’s material culture as ‘the sites and objects that help to define children’s worlds, as well as their experiences and their imaginations’.\textsuperscript{49} This has helped to expand the focus of childhood studies away from the problematic objects discussed by Brookshaw towards a multi-disciplinary approach engaging with landscape theories alongside material culture. This has been particularly fruitful for those studying childhood in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, given the development of a wide range of child-centred institutions, spaces, and objects during this time. Cultural historian John R. Gillis refers to this process as the ‘physical islanding of children’, the separation of children spatially from adults and from adult space, leading to the creation of multiple distinct children’s places.\textsuperscript{50} As an example of this,

\textsuperscript{44} Marjorie Harness Goodwin, ‘Children’s Linguistic and Social Worlds’, \textit{Anthropology Newsletter}, 38 (4) (1997), 1-4 (p. 1).


\textsuperscript{48} Baxter.

\textsuperscript{49} Fass, p. xi.

historian of urban development David Sloane demonstrates how children were physically segregated from adults by the creation of children’s hospitals, a process that mimicked the creation the juvenile judicial system which delineated criminals by age. Architectural historian Anne-Marie Châlet meanwhile describes the process by which schooling became increasingly segregated, with young children and infants separated from older children and adolescents.

Mirroring Brookshaw’s arguments on children’s material culture, educationalist Kim Rasmussen has rightly pointed out that ‘places for children’ are not always the same as ‘children’s places’. His investigation of the everyday lives of Danish children during the 1990s, with particular reference to the institutional spaces they occupied, uncovered a number of key places within these settings which children imbued with greater meaning than was prescribed by adults. Examples of this included a tree planted alongside a playground. The child being interviewed described climbing the tree as part of her play even though it was forbidden. The tree was meaningful to her as a place of play despite it not being part of the landscape created specifically for children. One other poignant example illustrates how children’s spaces are often made meaningful through imagination. He notes a pair of young boys describing a field landscape as a village, complete with rows of houses. The field was devoid of anything of note and was not a place dedicated to children, yet it had inspired the children to invest it with meaning, taken from their imagination. These examples demonstrate the way in which some researchers have used the term ‘place’ in their work. Place in the phenomenological tradition means a ‘meaningful location’, and a children’s place therefore is one ascribed meaning by a child or by children, as opposed to a space which adults perceive of as being meaningful to children or to their concept of childhood. These places can be contradictory, challenging adult’s expectations of childhood meaning, or overlapping, as children conform to expected behaviours and value systems. Historians and archaeologists have only recently begun to engage with this idea. Casella, and historian Shurlee Swain have investigated children’s historic experiences of institutional life

52 Anne-Marie Châlet ‘A Breath of Fresh Air: Open-Air Schools in Europe’ in Designing Modern Childhoods ed. by Gutman and de Coninck-Smith, pp. 107-27.
in order to demonstrate how these are framed spatially through the construction of unique places, and the appropriation of the material culture within these spaces. Historian Simon Sleight’s recent volume on young people and public space in Melbourne during the period 1870-1914 applies theories of space and place to illuminate how young people’s experiences of the city were constructed, and how they in turn constructed public space. Similarly, this thesis investigates this construction process while also seeking to acknowledge how children constructed and ascribed meaning to the parks, and furthermore how they further divided the landscape spatially into meaningful children’s places.

2.3 Landscape, Space, and Place

Perhaps the most significant aspect of material culture utilised in this study of the public park, is the landscape itself. As discussed above, I embrace a definition of material culture which includes the spaces and places which children occupy as well as the artefacts they use and play with. In his seminal work In Small Things Forgotten (1977), anthropologist James Deetz wrote that ‘material culture is usually considered to be roughly synonymous with artifacts’. He went on to argue that ‘a somewhat broader definition of material culture is useful in emphasizing how profoundly our world is the product of our thought, as that sector of our physical environment that we modify through culturally determined behaviour’. Despite Deetz’s proclamation, material culture and landscape have often seemed to be very separate areas of investigation, perhaps as a result of the growth of landscape studies as a distinct discipline within social anthropology and cultural geography. In order to set out my particular understanding of a material landscape, encompassing a definition of place as a meaningful space – utilised in the interdisciplinary approaches to children’s studies discussed above – this section will look at the way in which theories of landscape have developed over time. I will discuss in particular depth the recent scholarship

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57 Deetz, p. 35.
58 Deetz, p. 35.
which links landscape and agency as well as investigations of intersexuality and landscape. Urban landscape studies are less common than prehistoric studies, however recent developments in history and material culture studies have begun to address this. The way in which my thesis engages directly with these recent developments will be addressed.

Cultural historian Marina Moskowitz highlights the ambiguity of the term \textit{landscape}.\footnote{Marina Moskowitz, ‘Back Yards and Beyond: Landscapes and History’, in \textit{History and Material Culture} ed. by Karen Harvey (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 67-84 (p. 70).} She notes that the current usage of the word stems from three distinct origins.\footnote{Also Kenneth Olwig, \textit{Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic: From Britain’s Renaissance to America’s New World} (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), p. 17.} The German word \textit{landschaft} was a descriptive term for the marginal administrative regions of Denmark and the German States. The Old English word \textit{landskipe} ‘had a more social meaning, encompassing the community associated with a given place.’\footnote{Moskowitz, p. 70.} Conversely the Dutch word \textit{landschap} refers almost exclusively to the pictorial representation of a particular viewpoint, usually encompassing a view deemed picturesque or scenic. The way we think of and use the phrase landscape now encapsulates all three of these distinct traditions. Cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove’s work, \textit{Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape} (1984) was important in developing the debate over the use of landscape as a theoretical term. He argues that landscape is inexorably linked to a particular understanding of the relationship between ‘humans and their environment’, or ‘society and space’.\footnote{Denis Cosgrove, \textit{Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape}, 2$^{\text{nd}}$ edn (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 46.} While \textit{landschaft} and \textit{landskipe} clearly tie into this, it has more to do with landscape painting than might be apparent at first glance. Cosgrove draws our attention to the development of perspective as a tool for art and map-making in the fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries. He states that the technique privileges the eye, and therefore the voyeur, as the dominant master over a space whose form varies depending on its distance from the centre of this visual world. It is the voyeur’s ‘point of view which allows his “mastery over space” and stemming from that his rationalist conception of the world’.\footnote{Cosgrove, \textit{Social Formation}, pp. 48-9.} As landscape and visual arts historian John R. Stilgoe argues, ‘the aesthetics of...landscape painting originate both in an intellectual effort to order the spatial juxtaposition of rivers and fields and villages and in an emotional enterprise aimed at composing on canvas
something that celebrates and reinforces civil order’.  

In each of these three traditions then we can see the influence of humans on space. Landscape historian Paul Groth sums this up, writing ‘landscape denotes the interaction of people and place: a social group and its spaces, particularly the spaces to which the group belongs and from which its members derive some part of their shared identity and meaning’.  

As is clear from the discussion above, the term landscape is implicated in a specific ‘way of seeing’ the world, particularly for theorists like Cosgrove who utilised a broadly Marxist perspective to argue that it was ‘bourgeois, individualist and related to the exercise of power’. His key contribution to the theoretical debate surrounding the use of the term was that landscape had ‘social and cultural meanings, a symbolism – an “iconography”’. Along with fellow geographer Stephen Daniels, Cosgrove called for landscape to be viewed as ‘a cultural image’. This semiotic approach to landscape, coupled with a hermeneutic methodology led some, including a number of notable archaeologists, to argue that landscape, along with other aspects of material culture, could or should be ‘read’ as a text. Reflecting the wider linguistic turn within the humanities, this metaphor echoed the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz who argued that landscapes could be viewed ‘as a social document’ and interpreted ‘using techniques and methodologies of literary theory’. The notion of reading landscapes as texts is highly problematic for reasons which will be discussed below, however this approach contributed to our understanding of landscape in two key ways. Firstly, reading material culture as texts foregrounded the act of interpretation, enabling us to see how ‘the production of meaning is an ongoing process,
depending as much on the reader and the reader’s context as on the producer(s)’. 72

Secondly, in considering landscapes as texts, we begin to see them in relation to other sources. Urban geographer James R. Duncan defines intertextuality as ‘the interaction between different texts and between different types of texts such as written and landscape texts,…also between these texts and social practices which have become textualised’. 73 This emphasis on interpretation and a diverse range of sources proved particularly inspiring for post-medieval archaeologists such as Sarah Tarlow, who argued that ‘documentary and interpretive texts, art, architecture, music and artefacts’ enables the writing of ‘subtle, sophisticated and nuanced archaeologies’. 74 This thesis, despite differing methodologically from the textual approach, follows this lead, engaging with a diverse and wide ranging set of contemporary sources in order to contextualise the landscape. In doing so I acknowledge that landscapes are socially produced and can be investigated as such.

The textual approach to landscape and material culture is flawed in a number of ways, most significantly as archaeologist Bjornar Olsen states, because it fails to ‘help us understand what material culture is, the “nature” of it so to speak, or to understand the role it plays in human existence on a far more ontological level’. 75 It was this desire to explore a more experiential aspect of landscape which led to the development of a phenomenological approach. While a number of notable landscape archaeologists have embraced phenomenological approaches, their work has tended to focus on prehistoric case studies. 76 However, the way in which place and space have been utilised within the phenomenological tradition is of primary importance to this thesis and so this is the aspect which I will discuss. A phenomenological approach highlights the difference between the abstract space, what Tilley calls a universal, objective ‘simple surface for action’ and the humanised, value laden place, which cannot be separated from the human experience. 77 In his work The Practice of

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Everyday Life, Michel de Certeau contrasts two views of the urban landscape; the remote, ‘panoptic’, legible, aerial view utilised by detached, aloof and voyeuristic ‘space planner urbanist, city planner or cartographer’, and the view of the walkers, ‘the ordinary practitioners of the city...down below’. He writes that ‘these practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other’s arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility’. The ‘spatial practices’ of those walking, window shopping, and wondering through the city are personal, unknowing, and illegible to the voyeur. At the same time they can be seen as acts of resistance against the planner’s vision. The contrast of these two views is how space and place has been conceptualised within this thesis. Space is viewed remotely, legibly through maps, aerial photography and plans. Paths and features, like those within the public park, can be mapped onto the space, and from this perspective we can anticipate the actions of the users ‘down below’. Place by contrast is experienced through practice, made meaningful through the association of memorable acts. The construction of place can confound the planner’s vision, such as when paths are ignored in favour of an alternative route which ultimately leaves traces across the grass.

In his seminal work, The Production of Space, Henri Lefebvre expands on de Certeau’s binary definition of space and place. He notes differences between ‘conceived’, ‘perceived’, and ‘lived space’. Conceived space is the vision of planners and architects. Within the context of this thesis we might consider this to be the park space as it was designed to be used. Perceived space is the way in which this abstract, intellectually designed space is transformed into meaningful places. Lived space is the province of the imagination and the abstract. Occupied by ‘inhabitants’ or ‘users’ this is the space which we think about. Put another way, it is this lived space that we might consider when reading about a space in a newspaper, or looking at an image or painting. Following art historian W. J. T. Mitchell’s lead, throughout this thesis I utilise the terms space, place and landscape to roughly correlate with Lefebvre’s ternary explanations of conceived, perceived and lived

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79 de Certeau, p. 93.
space. Landscape here once again equates to a particular way of seeing, a view of a specific space which is coloured through memory, imagination and emotion. Through this interpretation of landscapes, we can consider them to be at once both real and imagined, and furthermore, they can appear, represented to us through both physical and literary formats. This thesis utilises this concept when engaging with contextualising sources. Fictional and factual literature, images, games and toys, all influenced the way children experienced park landscapes. I consider these to be significant aspect of the material culture which formed part of the experience of the late-Victorian and Edwardian public park. In her book *Cleansing the City: Sanitary Geographers in Victorian London* (2008), literary theorist Michelle Elizabeth Allen writes ‘literature is not exempt from the processes of social and spatial formation’, rather ‘literary productions continually emerge from and re-enter the social and material field’.\(^\text{82}\) Literature itself is an aspect of material culture and can therefore act as an agent in the production of social knowledge, specifically in this case in the experience of park space.

Critics of the work done by phenomenologists, particularly in the field of landscape archaeology have questioned the absence of materiality within the analysis. They seek to rematerialise the landscape, as Olsen puts it, to investigate ‘what landscapes and places have to offer us...how...they affect our being-in-the-world’.\(^\text{83}\) Much work on landscape has emphasised the human impact on space. Archaeologists like Olsen as well as Yannis Hamilakis whose work has focused on the experiential and sensual qualities of landscape,\(^\text{84}\) advocate engaging with landscape as a social actor, and questioning the role of landscapes on us. As historians Frank Mort and Lynda Nead emphasise in their work on urban sexual geographies, the city is not ‘a relatively passive backdrop’ but is rather ‘a constitutive part of the cultural and social formation of metropolitan modernity’.\(^\text{85}\) The urban setting of the public park is historically specific and deeply significant for this study. Children using the


public parks discussed in this thesis had for the most part grown up in towns or cities throughout Britain. Utilising Cosaro’s theory of interpretive reproduction we can note that their participation in society was shaped by the specifics of these material conditions. Their understanding of park space, and therefore the way in which they produced and reproduced social meaning within their particular peer groups and more broadly, was constrained by the specifics of the urban landscape. The urban landscapes of the towns and cities discussed in this thesis, the planned and regulated park spaces, and the innovative, creatively produced children’s places within them, all make up a significant part of the material culture associated with this study.

2.4 Methodology

In order to weave these threads together throughout my research, I have developed an approach which is evident in chapters three, four and five. I take as my starting point three themes which represent aspects of the way children were characterised in the contemporary literature, an approach inspired by the children’s literature critics within Adrienne E. Gavin and Andrew F. Humphries’ volume *Children in Edwardian Fiction: Worlds Enough and Time*. Within this volume, essays are grouped according to the way children were represented within the works they study, rather than by author, genre or time. This has the effect of foregrounding the children, rather than the institutions which held them, or the adults who impacted on their lives. This thesis aims to achieve the same. While the public park is the particular prism through which I am investigating, it is the experiences of the children who occupied them that are at the heart of this work. In each thematic chapter I begin by exploring the way in which the characterisation has been expressed in literature and in the material culture of the park, contextualising the idea. The park space, a product of landscape designers and urban planners is analysed to reveal the anticipated behaviours of children. The spatial practices of the children are then discussed, revealing how through interaction with the material world of the park, with each other, and with adults, social knowledge is produced, identities forged and peer cultures developed. In acknowledgement that children do not enter the park as blank slates, but are instead cultural beings already, I broaden this

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investigation to include a consideration of external influences; literature that had been read, games that had been played with, people interacted with, in short the material culture of childhood in a broader sense. As noted by de Certeau, the actions of ordinary passers-by can be subversive acts of resistance. I seek to acknowledge these acts of resistance on behalf of the children within the park, showing how anticipated behaviours did not always match up with actual ones. Children’s impact on the park was visible, rendered permanent through the countless images produced of them, the alterations made to the landscapes, and the behaviours they provoked in others. I remain sensitive to this aspect throughout the work in recognition of the way in which children are themselves producers of meanings which endure.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of academic scholarship in the field of children’s material culture, along with a consideration of relevant approaches within landscape studies. Reflecting the interdisciplinarity of this thesis, I have engaged with scholarship from archaeology, history, cultural geography, anthropology, sociology and literary studies. In doing so I have set out my particular understanding of the terms utilised throughout this work. I also aim to situate my own contribution to the growing and exciting body of work on the periphery.

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87 de Certeau, see above for reference.
Chapter Three

The Natural Child

For I was reared/In the great city, pent ‘mid cloisters dim/And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars./But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze/By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags/Of ancient mountains, and beneath the clouds.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ‘Frost at Midnight’. 1

In her introduction to a 1995 special ‘Green Worlds’ edition of children’s fiction journal, The Lion and the Unicorn, editor Suzanne Rahn makes the point that ‘nearly two hundred years after Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote “Frost at Midnight”, the connection between children and the natural world still seems natural to us’. 2 The perception that children are in some way natural; more in tune with nature, more instinctive, and perhaps more animal-like than adults, is an idea which continues to permeate modern society. While the overwhelming majority of children live in urban areas, the insistence that a ‘proper childhood’ is only available to those children living in the countryside resonates strongly within the British public imagination. 3 Cultural geographer Owain Jones’ study of this phenomenon sees the origins to be in ‘romantic inheritances that see childhood as a state of naturalness and innocence, and the urban as a cultural (often corrupted) edifice which has moved away from nature’. 4 Both Rahn and Jones state that the natural child was a significant concept for the Romantic Movement. However, as will be demonstrated, the idea that children were natural and would benefit from nature was also deeply embedded in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century public parks. During this time the concept of the natural child became widely accepted as a means by which to define and understand real children’s behaviour. Children who did not conform to the expected behaviour of a ‘natural child’ had to be shaped and trained within the park ensuring a healthy and successful childhood, and thereby secure the future health of the nation. These ideas continue to form a significant rationale for the institution of modern-day childhood. It is perhaps a tribute to the longevity

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4 O. Jones, ‘Naturally Not’, p. 17.
of these initiatives that the rhetoric of the natural child continues to this day, despite calls from Jones and others to ‘shake off the notion of the urban as a somehow inferior space for childhood’.\(^5\)

This chapter seeks to explore the ways in which the natural child manifests itself within the Victorian popular imagination and how this was used to justify and influence the creation and design of public park spaces. I will discuss the design and layout of the parks, the way these were interpreted by their audience, and how these impacted on the lived experience of parks for the children who used them. As Jones writes of contemporary urban childhoods, ‘this reflects how the “real” and “imagined” are dialectically bound together in the ongoing (re)construction of lived childhoods in urban areas’.\(^6\) I will investigate the way public parks engaged with concepts of nature in their design, focusing on three specific types of space; wilderness areas, animal enclosures, and water features. Each of these spaces offered unique and differing exposure to nature and suggest the park designers’ understanding of the natural child. I will seek to demonstrate how these spaces were interpreted by children through their activities in the parks.

As stated in Chapter 1, public parks are the product of a particular way of viewing nature. Architectural historian Michael Laurie has investigated the provision of nature in American cities during the nineteenth century.\(^7\) He identified a number of key concepts which underpinned the way nature was viewed. Firstly, the concept that ‘natural or natural-looking parks’ would benefit the health of people by ‘providing space for exercise and relaxation in pure air’.\(^8\) Secondly, ‘the opportunity to contemplate nature would contribute to a much needed improvement in morals’.\(^9\) Thirdly, nature was aesthetically appealing and therefore improved the appearance of the city. Finally, public interest in nature would be increased due to the educational opportunities afforded them through visiting arboreta and zoological gardens and as a result, the public would welcome the addition of ‘natural areas

\(^5\) O. Jones, ‘Naturally Not’, p. 28.
\(^6\) O. Jones, ‘Naturally Not’, p. 18.
\(^8\) M. Laurie, p. 35.
\(^9\) M. Laurie, p. 35.
with indigenous plants as a habitat for wildlife’. Those who planned and designed British parks sought to create a space enhanced by these qualities of nature, however they were often forced to compromise. While some parks did engage well-known landscape designers to provide an overall vision of park design, the vast majority, constrained by cost, time-scale and politics, were designed by local borough surveyors, head gardeners and local planning bodies. Parks therefore, rarely exhibit a coherent vision that can be identified and interpreted. This is a challenge to the study of the concepts behind park building, however, what was deemed significant enough to be included is often telling. Late-Victorian and Edwardian parks provided access to nature in an overwhelmingly controlled and cultivated manner. Flowerbeds and shrubberies were often fenced off from paths, lakes and ponds were ornamental and ringed by fences and pathways, water fountains were ornate, ‘keep off the grass’ signs were omnipresent and trees were uprooted in the building process and replaced by young saplings, which were planted following straight lines to form boulevards. Despite this, some parks included less controlled elements of nature in their designs. Wilderness areas grew increasingly common, lake islands were often turned into wetland areas, and in some larger parks, animals were added both in cages and roaming freely. As will be explored in more depth, these more ‘wild’ or ‘untamed’ elements of nature were frequently linked with children.

The works of educationalist G. Stanley Hall provide an insight into the way the Romantic natural child was theorised in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. In his 1906 work, Youth: Its Education, Regimen, and Hygiene he wrote that the potential of a natural childhood in the countryside was by now ‘hopelessly ideal.’ Indeed some 77% of the population lived in urban environments by 1901. He insisted therefore that the child’s ‘savage instincts’ should be indulged vicariously though ‘tales from literature, history and tradition’, and ‘in this way, aided by his vivid visual imagination, the child may enter upon his heritage from the past’. Furthermore, he argued that children should whenever possible be induced to visit ‘field, forest, hill, shore, the water, flowers, animals, the true homes of childhood in this wild, undomesticated stage from which modern conditions have

10 M. Laurie, p. 36; Laurie suggests an additional concern was that the proximity of nature would increase property value.
12 G. S. Hall, Youth, pp. 3-4.
kidnapped and transported him.’\textsuperscript{13} One of the founders of the child-study movement in the 1880s, Hall’s works were influential, particularly given his friendship with other notable theorists such as Freud.\textsuperscript{14} The parent, educator or reformer following Hall’s advice sought to rescue the child from modern conditions by a dual approach of ‘stories and nature.’\textsuperscript{15} This combined project aimed to provide urban children with the chance to roam a landscape, not just rural, but arcadian, belonging to an imagined golden era, heroic and pastoral. This is the landscape of the pre-industrial past, rather than of the present, where children act out the role of pre-modern man, indulging their savage proclivities by ‘hunting, fishing, fighting, roving’ and ‘playing’.\textsuperscript{16}

In writing this Hall made an assumption which helps us to understand the wild versus cultivated duality of the park landscape. He contends that nature can be taught to a child. Literary critic Jacqueline Rose encounters this same assumption when addressing the children’s literature of Alan Garner. She claims that this is a particularly Rousseauian view of children and nature, and argues that this sets up an interesting paradox. On the one hand, the argument runs that if nature can be taught then the production of a natural man is a ‘highly artificial process.’\textsuperscript{17} Yet in attempting to teach the child only, childhood is set up as ‘a primitive state where “nature” is still to be found if only one gets to it on time’; nature is thus a ‘quality in the child’ rather than something to be instilled.\textsuperscript{18} Hall seemed to adhere to this Rousseauian view of the potential for nature within a child which was not present in an adult. Nonetheless he was aware of the contradictions which this presented; he wrote that the ‘very phrase [we must teach nature] is ominous’.\textsuperscript{19} Yet in continuing to advocate this idea it may be possible to conclude that he and his contemporaries viewed children as being inherently natural, yet corrupted by the influences of modernity. Their inborn natural affinity could be preserved through the correct means of education, through ‘stories and

\textsuperscript{13} G. S. Hall, Youth, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{14} For the significance of Hall’s contributions to the psychology of childhood and youth, see J. J. Arnett, ‘G. Stanley Hall’s Adolescence: Brilliance and nonsense’, History of Psychology, 9 (13) (2006), 186-97.
\textsuperscript{15} G. S. Hall, Youth, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{16} G. S. Hall, Youth, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{17} Jacqueline Rose, The Case of Peter Pan: Or, The Impossibility of Children’s Fiction, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), p. 44.
\textsuperscript{18} Rose, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{19} G. S. Hall, Youth, p. 8.
nature’, in particular through evoking the pastoral. The natural child was therefore both wild and innate, but also requiring cultivation.

The public park performed an important role in this cultivation. Firstly it provided children with the physical access to nature which, it was argued, was so important to their development. Secondly it provided a space for children to engage imaginatively and emotionally with idyllic landscapes. As mentioned, these landscapes were supposed to be Arcadian, pastoral and rural, and it is no coincidence that these terms were frequently used by those who championed the preservation of open spaces.\(^\text{20}\) Art historian Jan Marsh investigates the rise of pastoralism in her book *Back to the Land: Pastoral Impulse in Victorian England, 1880-1914*. Those who engaged with the back-to-the-land movement, such as John Ruskin, William Morris and Edward Carpenter, evoked semi-mythical landscapes of the past and used this Romantic rhetoric in order to do so.\(^\text{21}\) Those who focussed on children, such as Margaret Macmillan who pioneered the open-air school, or Samuel Barnett who was instrumental in the campaign for ‘boarding out’ urban children in the countryside, argued that providing children with access to nature was essential, not just for health, but for their development.\(^\text{22}\) Victorian author Richard Jefferies, who Marsh describes as the ‘Nature-priest for a generation of readers’, wrote in his book *The Dewy Morn* (1884) ‘all of you with little children […] take them somehow into the country among green grass and yellow wheat, among trees, by hills and streams, if you wish their highest education, that of the heart and the soul, to be accomplished’.\(^\text{23}\) As part of this development, children were to engage not only bodily with nature, but also mentally, evoking imagination and emotion. Jefferies was once again vocal on this aspect of a child’s communion with nature. In his children’s fiction work *Wood Magic* (1881), Nature communicates directly with the boy Bevis, entreatsing him ‘do not listen, dear, not for one moment, to the stuff and rubbish they tell you down there in the houses where they will not let me come. If they say the Earth is not beautiful, tell them they do not speak the truth’.\(^\text{24}\)

Knowledge, identity, and happiness reside for Jefferies in the imaginative communication

\(^\text{21}\) Marsh, pp. 8-10.
with natural landscapes and the rejection of built environments. For those who embraced this pastoralist vision, public parks provided children with an opportunity to have a close engagement with nature. They were considered therefore instrumental in a child’s upbringing; physically, mentally, and spiritually.

3.1 Park Landscapes

Late-Victorian and Edwardian public parks engaged with concepts of ‘nature’ in a number of distinct ways. One of these, discussed in more depth in Chapter 1, was their stated aim of providing access to nature for the growing urban populous. Nature was seen to be morally and physically uplifting and parks were intended to be the ‘lungs of the city’, an integral part of a healthy functioning society. Rhetoric used by park reformers and designers drew heavily on a Romantic interpretation of nature, yet parks were not constructed to be Romantic in style. The Romantic ‘picturesque’ style of landscape gardening, championed by Humphry Repton and William Gilpin, was designed to operate as a mediation of the beautiful and the sublime, including both wild and untamed elements of nature along with curved lakes, broken paths, follies and overgrown ruins.25 As discussed in Chapter 1, critics of this style in the early nineteenth century argued that this style of landscaping had become so ‘naturalistic’ that it had ceased to be design.26 Instead ‘gardenesque’ designers like J. C. Loudon championed the use of exotic plant species, hot house flowerbeds, bordered serpentine lakes and wide paths as well as themed and often bordered garden spaces. Loudon’s designs reveal the beginning of a nineteenth-century fascination with botanical curiosities and collecting; certainly apparent in Loudon’s insistence that all plant specimens be labelled. Later park designers like Charles H. J. Smith continued this tradition of labelling plants for instruction. A desire to demonstrate man’s triumph over nature also underpinned Loudon’s work. Non-native plants and flowers cultivated in greenhouses were to be planted and supplanted in rapid succession, increasing significantly the work involved in creating and maintaining a natural garden space.

Loudon’s work was significant in influencing the design of public parks being built across the country by the time of his death. While those who followed him, such as Edward Kemp and Smith, developed a more relaxed approach to the ‘gardenesque’ style, the elements of public park design drew heavily from this tradition. Artificial lakes, the spoil from which was taken to create islands and mounds within the park, flowerbeds, terraced walkways and oriental motifs were all essential components of the ‘gardenesque’. Mid-to-late-century park designers followed the principles of the ‘gardenesque’, although demonstrated a greater pragmatism than Loudon. Edward Kemp, who designed Saltwell Park, exemplified this approach. He wrote in his work *How to Lay Out a Garden* (1850) that ‘a garden is for comfort, convenience and use, as well as for making a beautiful picture’. Smith also championed park spaces which were useful in his book *Parks and Pleasure Grounds* (1852). Harking back to the Romantic notion that access to nature was of benefit to mankind, he wrote that it is ‘good for the mental health of those who are habituated to the wear and tear of the busy haunts of men to be brought face to face with the tranquillizing as well as suggestive works of God in the world of nature’. His pragmatism allowed him to acknowledge that nature could be artificially created amongst the ‘dense and unhealthy crowding of streets and lanes’. Victorian parks were filled with features Loudon would have approved of however, they also demonstrated a commitment to the Romantic principle of embracing nature as something healthy, spiritual, and beneficial to humanity. What was unique about Smith and Kemp was their conviction that nature could be artificially created to replicate these health-giving benefits, even when situated in an urban context. As Kemp writes, garden designers should be nature’s ‘imitators, but not copyists, transcribing her spirit and not her individual expressions’. The public park is an artistic and artificial rendering of nature, while still providing the actual contact with nature which the designers and campaigners felt important for the urban population.

27 Kemp, p. 99.  
28 C. H. J. Smith, p. 156.  
29 C. H. J. Smith, p. 158.  
30 Kemp, p. 131.
3.2 Wilderness Spaces

Figure 3.1: OS Map, Saltwell Park (1910). Section of 1910 OS Map depicting Saltwell Park. Digimap. Coloured to show location of main entrance (red) and the Dene (green). See Appendix 1 for full map.
Figure 3.2: OS Map, *Whitworth Park* (1900s). Section of OS Map depicting Whitworth Park. Digimap. Coloured to show location of the main entrance (red), the mound (green) and with sightlines from park benches surrounding lake and bandstand. Note how the mound offered a level of privacy for those playing there. See Appendix 2 for full map.
Wilderness spaces were informal features, often with dense planting, which mimicked naturally-occurring streams, woodlands or overgrown thickets. For park designers such as Kemp and Smith the inclusion of wilderness spaces in public parks drew on picturesque ideas and yet did so in a manner which suggests more to do with nostalgia and a late-Victorian way of viewing nature than a desire to replicate the gardens of Repton and Gilpin. The use of wilderness spaces in small urban parks was a symbolic act as well as an aesthetic one. By the late-nineteenth century, rapid industrial growth meant that it became increasingly difficult to secure large park spaces in the centre of towns and cities. In order to afford more space, many parks at this time were built on the outskirts of provincial towns such as Greenhead Park in Huddersfield (30 acres) or on the edge of suburban developments such as Roundwood Park in Willesden (26.5 acres) and Saltwell Park in Gateshead (55 acres). The majority of parks in urban centres during this era took over
disused graveyards and burial grounds and were therefore limited in size. One example of this was St George’s Gardens in London. Originally the burial ground for St George-in-the-East church, it was converted into an ‘outdoor sitting-room’ following campaigning by Octavia Hill and the Kyrle Society.\textsuperscript{31} Opened in 1884, the park stretches to only 3 acres in size, yet still included a series of winding paths, a decorative fountain and drinking fountain in its design. Whitworth Park (18 acres) was created in the grounds of two former mansions, built before Rusholme in Manchester became densely populated. It was generally accepted that smaller public parks, of 40 acres or less, should be more formal in style in order to provide ‘the largest provision for games within the space’.\textsuperscript{32} Despite this, even smaller parks sought to include wilderness areas, such as the mound in Whitworth Park, in their designs. The positioning, design, and layout of these wilderness spaces are significant as they stand in contrast to the more formal, cultivated, and restricted contact with nature that the rest of the park landscape sought to provide. I will start by discussing the significance of these factors in relation to Saltwell Park before discussing in more depth two specific wilderness areas; the Dene in Saltwell Park (figures 3.1 and 3.3) and the Mound in Whitworth Park (figure 3.2).

\textsuperscript{31} Octavia Hill, ‘Open Spaces’ in \textit{Our Common Land and Other Short Essays} by Octavia Hill (London: Macmillan and Co, 1877), pp. 105-151 (pp.111-12).

\textsuperscript{32} Chadwick, p. 222.
Figure 3.4: Mr Smith Carter, *Formal Style at the Entrance to Greenhead Park* (1910). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive.

Figure 3.5: (Not attributed), *Formal Planting at Main Gates of Whitworth Park* (circa 1913). Postcard. Rusholme Archive.
Figure 3.6: (Not attributed), *Main Entrance, Saltwell Park* (circa 1900). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies.

The area immediately accessible when entering a park was often formal, with statues, flowerbeds, and buildings all situated inside the elaborate main gates (see figures 3.4-3.6). The main entrance at Saltwell Park did not have many ornate park features. There were no statues, fountains or buildings such as those found at Whitworth, Roundwood or Greenhead Park. However Figure 3.6 shows that on either side of the path just inside the gates were flowerbeds and low planting. The effect is still formal but the real impact of the entrance space was the view. As discussed in Chapter 2, cultural geographers such as Dennis Cosgrove have highlighted how the development of visual perspective in landscape painting and map making during the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century, allowed the viewer to position themselves within the scene, visually appropriating land as their own territory. When entering Saltwell Park, the visitor immediately had their eyes drawn to the view of the park landscape but also the inaccessible land beyond it belonging to the Ravensworth estates (see topographical map in Appendix 1). This deliberate design feature by the

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designer Edward Kemp encouraged the visitor to view the whole panorama of park and rural greenery beyond. The view contrasted the formal space immediately in front of them with the more rugged space beyond echoing the view an earlier landowner may have had from his house at the heart of his estate. This reveals a desire to make the visitor feel as though the land was for them and that they were master over the domain. This was undoubtedly aimed at adults as much as children but it is interesting to note that children were encouraged to think upon parks as places for them. A newspaper article written about children playing in Whitworth Park demonstrates this, ‘some of them think the park belongs to the keepers [...] when told that it is now our park, everybody’s park, in fact their own park, they shrink away, as from a truth too great for contemplation’. According to the correspondent, children sometimes struggled with this notion of ownership, yet the positioning of the main gates at Saltwell allowed children to engage with the landscape as if it were their own territory. The deliberate placement of the gates in the north-east corner, to facilitate the expansive view, fostered this sense of public ownership which was important to park reformers who sought public money for the creation and maintenance for them.

The view from the entrance to the park contrasted the formal areas immediately in front of the visitor with the increasingly rugged landscape beyond. This effect, made possible through the use of a ha-ha, was central to the design of landscape estates by Capability Brown and his contemporaries. Humphrey Repton, who saw himself as Brown’s successor, took this further reinstating terraces and formal gardens immediately surrounding the house, while maintaining the wilder park landscapes beyond. The aim of this was to create perspective and depth in the landscape, facilitating the gaze of the surveyor. Kemp utilised this technique when situating the main gates of Saltwell Park in the north-east corner, but also in laying out the park in general. Rapid urban development was underway to the north of the park and the main gates not only offered the best view, but also the most convenient entrance to those who lived nearby (see Appendix 1). A journey from the urban streets into the park provided a succession of spaces which gradually

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34 Andy Croll, ‘Street Disorder, Surveillance and Shame: Regulating Behaviour in the Public Spaces of the Late Victorian British Town’, Social History, 24 (3) (1999), 250-68 (pp.262-3).
became less formal and more wild or natural-looking as the landscape dipped down. Past the main gates and flowerbeds, the pathway split into two. On the left was a formal promenade with pavilions, shelters and viewing points across the park, on the right the path led past the open playing fields, and around the perimeter of the fence towards the tennis courts. The Dene area, the park’s main wilderness feature, was buried deep in the park landscape at the lowest point. This element of the park design reflects a progressive journey from urban to rural which takes place through the park landscape. This journey echoed the day trips that were becoming available to increasing numbers of urbanites. The Cheap Trains Act of 1883, led to a reduction in train fares and an increase in third class carriages which, along with the growth of travel companies, enabled the working-classes to go on day trips to the country or seaside for leisure. The journey from city to countryside, through suburban areas was made clearly visible for those travelling on the trains and reflected the town as a place of work and domesticity and the countryside as a place of leisure. Likewise, the journey from urban to wild in the park also reflected the park’s significance as a place for leisure and a spatial separation from work for those who used it. The park then visibly positioned ‘wild’ nature as an alternative to work and to domestic concerns. Work, domestic chores and caring for young siblings was a reality for many working-class children, despite on-going reforms. The park design presented nature as an escape from this.

For the most part, contact with nature in the public park was deeply codified and stilted due to park bye-laws which commonly, as in the case of Whitworth Park, stated that ‘branches, leaves and flowers must not be plucked, trees must not be cut, nor climbed, nor used for swinging on’. Furthermore, ‘rambling off the walks and lawns’ was forbidden. Indeed court cases were brought against those who took fruit or nuts from the park trees as well as those who fished the park lakes. Wilderness spaces by contrast may have allowed a more interactive experience of nature for visiting children. The mound in Whitworth Park, created out of the spoil from the lake excavation and densely planted with trees, was

37 HMG Cheap Trains Act 1883. Railways Archive <http://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/documents/HMG_ActCheap1883.pdf> [accessed 20/10/15].
38 ‘Whitworth Park, Manchester’, The Manchester Courier, 16 June 1890, p. 5.
40 Two boys received fines for stealing cherries in the park. See ‘Saltwell Park’, Newcastle Courant, 20 July 1883, p. 5; Two boys caught fishing the lake at Saltwell Park. They had removed a number of fish which had been newly purchased by the Committee. They received a fine. See ‘Fishing in Saltwell Park’, Newcastle Courant, 13 July 1883, p. 5.
described by *The Manchester Examiner and Times* as providing ‘attractive playgrounds for children’ given its ‘grassy slopes and sheltered nooks’.  

Children were clearly supposed to interact with the space, despite restrictive bye-laws. The Dene in Saltwell Park also offered an opportunity to view elements of nature not included in the rest of the park, and perhaps a chance to touch or closely examine plants, such as the ferns and labelled exotic plants included there. Throughout the nineteenth century, the creation of natural history collections, both for personal and public consumption in museums led to an unprecedented level of interest in, and knowledge of, the natural world. Collecting bird’s eggs, shells, butterflies and ferns became a national pastime and one which was suitable for children as well as adults; indeed the collection of ferns was so popular that author of the children’s book *The Water-babies* (1863), Charles Kingsley, coined the term ‘Pteridomania’ to describe it.  

Parks offered those without gardens a chance to engage with this national pastime without leaving the town or city boundaries. If not exactly encouraged in the park, the widespread campaign to prevent children collecting birds eggs discussed later in this chapter demonstrates that this sort of activity almost certainly took place here. The labelling of plant species, an accepted practice in all of the case study parks, further emphasised the park’s connection with the science of natural history. Children were especially significant in this drive, and countless flower and botanical books appeared on the market for children in this latter part of the century.

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**Figure 3.7:** (Not attributed), *Dene, Saltwell Park* (circa 1904). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies. This view is from the main bridge crossing the dene (see figure 3.8).

**Figure 3.8:** (Not attributed), *The Dene in Saltwell Park* (circa 1904). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies. Note the park official standing on the main bridge in the centre of the image. The lower bridge is the focus of figure 3.7.
Dene is a Northumbrian word for the steep, wooded gorge through which flowed a small ‘burn’, or stream. The Dene was originally part of the Saltwell Estate landscape that Edward Kemp incorporated into his design for the public park. Figure 3.9 is a painting of the space before Kemp densely planted the space with shade-loving plants like Rhododendrons, Gunnera, Swamp Cypress and Ferns, many of which were labelled for visitors. Nothing in the design of the space suggests a particular emphasis on children’s use, yet it is striking that images of the Dene produced in the early twentieth century frequently include children (see figures 3.7 and 3.10). These pictures are carefully staged shots, showing children individually or in small groups posed to look at the camera. This was very different to the sort of shot taken around the lakeside for example, where candid shots of children at play were far more common. These pictures in the Dene were carefully selected portrait shots, rather than activity shots, and the intention appears to be to stage children in a picturesque way, in a specific place. As has been stated, children were thought to have a greater affinity for and understanding of nature. By photographing children in the wilderness area of the park the photographer was drawing on this idea. The emphasis on children, rather than adults, in
this particularly wild rendition of nature further highlights how the photographer was articulating the idea that children were at home in nature. This is in contrast to the adults in the photographs. In figure 3.8 the park warden is just visible on the main pathway over the Dene, clearly at the boundary of the space, while in figure 3.10 a man accompanies a group of children who are the main focus of the image. These images seem to articulate the idea that children, like the nature that they were linked with, were picturesque. The pictures of children playing around the lakeside focus on children’s activities as the subject for the photo (see figure 3.11), in a similar way to the images of adults promenading or listening to music by the bandstand. These were ‘good’ forms of leisure in keeping with the values of the park, and children’s play as a particularly significant element of park activity is discussed in the next chapter. These images in the Dene do not necessarily fit into this model however as the children within the space are staged, more in common with images of children standing by particular features, such as the family grouping stood by the war memorial in figure 3.12. What children add to these images is an ideological aspect. Children in these photos are articulating a positive message about the park’s role in securing the nation’s future, through teaching them about patriotism (discussed in depth in Chapter 5) and allowing them the access to wild nature which theorists like Hall were positing as essential for their health.
Figure 3.10: (Not attributed), *Children in the Dene, Saltwell Park* (circa 1900). Photograph. Gateshead Local Studies.

Figure 3.11: (Not attributed), *The Lake & Green, Saltwell Park* (circa 1900). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies. Children play in the background while those in the foreground watch the lake. In the background on the left it is possible to see the bandstand before it was moved to the centre of the lake island. The Almond Pavilion is also visible beyond the playing fields.
The picturesque conception of landscape is dualistic, containing the beautiful as well as the sublime. The natural child was also dualistic in this way. Literary theorist Christopher Herbert argues that nineteenth century fiction writers engaged with two competing versions of nature, demonstrated clearly in the novel *Adam Bede* (1859) by George Eliot. The first is a Wordsworthian idyllic pastoralism such as the fictional setting of Hayslope which Eliot describes rapturously throughout the novel. This landscape is a source of ‘unusual strength and serenity of spirit’ for those who live and work within it. Nevertheless, the scenery obscures the darker and more treacherous aspects of nature which also underpin the novel. Milkmaid Hetty Sorrell embodies these two aspects of nature. Her beautiful appearance is described as a spring-tide beauty [...] the beauty of young frisking things, round-limbed, gambolling, circumventing you by a false air of innocence—the innocence

of a young star-browed calf, for example, that, being inclined for a promenade out of bounds, leads you a severe steeplechase over hedge and ditch, and only comes to a stand in the middle of a bog.  

This appearance inspires love and affection in the novel’s other characters, especially her lover Captain Donnithorne and her admirer Adam Bede. However, her beauty obscures a cold-hearted brutal nature which leads her to murder her new-born infant. When she falls pregnant, she lacks motherly instincts and instead is depicted as having a brutal, naturalistic, child-like nature. She is described repeatedly as an animal, being compared strikingly to vermin or a bitch, and this defines her character. She lacks the human sympathy which is shown by characters like Dinah, who in contrast to her childlike cousin, is controlled, civilised and insensible to her animalistic charms. As argued throughout this chapter, the late-Victorian and Edwardian child embodied these two aspects of nature, rural nostalgia, a symbol of a more innocent past, and a brutal, animalistic and savage temperament. The Dene, as a picturesque space incorporates both of these elements of nature, far more so than the formal planting areas or grazed playing fields. Using children in images of this space reflects contemporary understandings that they too were dualistic and so held an affinity with this particular space.

The children in the images are not depicted as being particularly brutal or animalistic, however the images place them at the heart of the landscape, as opposed to on the peripheries. This could suggest how children were thought to be better at navigating the space than the adults. In D. H. Lawrence’s *The White Peacock* the young girl Alice is shown to be at home in the woods, able to comprehend even the more savage and sexualised aspects of it, while the young adults seem to have lost their affinity with nature. The young adults walk through the woods and are thrown into reverie at the sight of the snowdrops which line the ground. They discuss the unknown meaning of the flowers while Lettie, who is gathering them, states that this is ‘some knowledge we have lost’. A short while later Alice, a young girl, takes the flowers from her and asks ‘don’t they suit me, an innocent little soul like me? Lettie won’t wear them – she’s not meek and mild and innocent like me’. Alice is of course more knowing than innocent, but she constructs her childhood identity as

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45 Herbert, p. 423-4.
47 Lawrence, p. 106.
innocent and natural, in contrast to the grown-up Lettie. Furthermore, the four young adults ignore or are pointedly unaware of the sexual attraction which exists between Lettie and George and to some extent between Cyril and Emily. Alice however is clearly aware of this attraction and so is able to tease Lettie about this. The wood becomes a threatening place to these adults, particularly to Lettie due to this unacknowledged sexuality, when it had previously been a favourite childhood haunt. To Alice however, the woods remain navigable, despite or perhaps because she is aware of the more savage and sexualised aspects of nature.

The Dene is portrayed in the photographs as precisely this sort of wild landscape children had an affinity with, regardless of whether or not children enjoyed playing here. Indeed the potential for play in the Dene was undoubtedly restricted. Some children who used the park unsupervised by parents may well have enjoyed the Dene space, navigating its paths and interacting with the material culture within. However, adult behaviour, in particular female adult behaviour was closely monitored in the parks. Chapter 1 discussed the way in which public parks were connected to the desire to spread middle-class notions of respectability to all. There were fears over the corruptibility of women in public spaces, intensified by media reports such as W. T. Stead’s widely-read, sensationalist report ‘the Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’ in the Pall Mall Gazette (1885), which outlined how nursemaids in the park were in danger of being trafficked into the sex industry. The Dene, being a valley, had poor visibility and along with the dense planting may have been avoided for this reason. Furthermore, in 1911, a possible child molestation in Whitworth Park emphasised that children too could be the victim of sexual threat. The Dene could be enjoyed safely from the main pathway which ran across the space (see figure 3.13), rather than by walking along the meandering narrow paths and across the smaller bridges that were photographed with the children. For some children this may have represented the only interaction they had with the space, reinforcing the notion that the decision to include wilderness spaces was stylistic, not just practical. Children who did use the space were not completely unsupervised, but rather were more remotely observed by the male park keeper and associated staff. This is exhibited in a 1904 postcard of the Dene, where the park keeper

48 GML-GB127-MB27, 7 June 1911.
is faintly seen on the main bridge, looking down on the lower pathway and bridges (See figure 3.8). What is clear from this discussion is that the notion of childhood affinity for natural spaces, and the expectation of children’s exploration and use of the space was significant to those creating and depicting the park. The reality of children’s experiences of the space however was far more complex and less straightforward. The manner in which children themselves may have interpreted these spaces will be discussed in more depth in relation to the mound in Whitworth Park.

![The Bridge in the Dene, Saltwell Park (circa 1907). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies.](image)

**Figure 3.13:** (Not attributed), *The Bridge in the Dene, Saltwell Park* (circa 1907). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies.

The mound is an artificial feature in Whitworth Park, created by the depositing of earth from the excavation of the lake. Situated in the north-west corner of the park, it was densely planted with saplings, following straight lines on either side of the summit. This meant that the northern side of the mound would be invisible to those in the park. Furthermore, the park benches closest to the mound faced away from the area, towards the bandstand and the lake. As stated above, the mound was considered to be of special
interest to children who might play amongst the ‘grassy slopes and sheltered nooks’. The dense planting of trees in this area perhaps reflects the idea that Whitworth Park was to be a ‘woodland park’ for the public, with a special emphasis placed on children. Smith wrote that in a park smaller than forty acres, the majority of space should be given over to ‘lawns, walks, shrubberies and moderate groups of trees’, rather than to woodland spaces or pasture. This was to ensure that as much space as possible could be utilised for recreation and sport. In choosing to ignore this idea, supported not just by Smith but also by other influential park designers of the time such as Edward Kemp and T. H. Mawson, the designer of Whitworth Park and those behind its creation were making a statement not just about park design, but also about the expectation of children’s play. Rather than provide sporting facilities, gymnasiums or large areas of grass, the park designer chose to densely plant with trees. This planting was deliberate and mature trees were uprooted in order to make way for young saplings. The layout of this space tells us about the way in which the designers expected, or intended the space to be experienced.

Given that the designers went to such lengths to plant trees on the mound, it is significant to consider the trees which were included in the design. The mound is planted almost entirely with ash trees and it is certain that this particular tree held some meaning for the contemporary public. Indeed a mature Ash tree was deemed significant enough to uproot and move in 1905 in order for the gallery extension to be built, rather than be chopped down; a process so unusual that it attracted press coverage. Reading meaning into plants and flowers was a widespread cultural practice during this time. Floriography, otherwise known as the language of flowers, first introduced the century before, gained popularity throughout the Victorian era. Books such as Kate Greenaway’s The Language of Flowers (1884) aided those seeking meaning in planting and in the giving of particular flowers, articulating messages which might not be properly spoken out loud. Children’s fiction writers such as Frances Hodgson Burnett used floriography in their writing meaning that children were not excluded from a widespread cultural engagement with symbolic

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50 Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project Text Archives (WPTA), MS Agreement between Manchester City Council and Victoria University of Manchester WPTA-075. <DOI: 10.5284/1032009>
interpretations of plants and flowers. To the park audience, well versed in this symbolism, the park designers were not merely planting trees for aesthetics, but also to communicate messages. In popular mythology ash was associated with health and healing, especially in relation to children.\textsuperscript{54} Furthermore, ash was thought to guard children from ill intentioned spirits. D.C. Watts notes how ‘English mothers rigged little hammocks to ash trees, where their children might sleep while field work was going on, believing that the wood and leaves were a sure protection against dangerous animals and spirits’.\textsuperscript{55} The use of the tree in a space dedicated to health and the provision of healthy moralistic play spaces away from the ills of the street seems particularly apt.

Ash is prominent throughout the park, although in other areas it is interspersed with other indigenous species such as plane, horse chestnut, sycamore, beech, oak and turkey oak (reintroduced to Britain in the eighteenth century), holly, hawthorn and fruit trees. Only the mound seems to have been almost exclusively planted with this one variety. Ash trees are quick growing and it is this trait which may have appealed to the park designers. These fast growing trees would provide rapid cover of dense foliage, supporting the creation of this area as a woodland space. In the previous century, the fast growing properties of ash had lent itself to coppicing. Until the mass extraction of coal, coppiced wood was used to form charcoal in order to fuel metal smelting, as well as traditional goods such as ash tool handles, woven baskets, and fence posts. A coppice would be planted almost entirely in one particular species, ash, oak and hazel being most widespread.\textsuperscript{56} Coppicing had been practiced since the Neolithic, and became widespread as a woodland management technique in the medieval period.\textsuperscript{57} By the late-nineteenth century however, this practice was severely in decline as demand for the products fell and woodland was converted into pasture or built upon.\textsuperscript{58} It is unlikely that the park designers intended to coppice the trees planted on the mound, rather their choice of trees and the space design can be seen as an ideological choice. The park designers were not only rejecting standard park design by


\textsuperscript{55} Watts, p. 15.


\textsuperscript{58} Peterken, \textit{Woodland Conservation}, p. 27.
including dense woodland spaces, but were also designing a feature which harked back to a pre-industrial past. This further underlined the pastoral connotations of the ash tree as a safe place for children to rest while their mothers worked the fields mentioned above.

Nostalgia for ancient rural woodlands influenced the creation of this mound space, but it was also a space and indeed a park which was firmly aimed at children. As well as being widely known as Whitworth Children’s Park from the time of its creation, a legal document drawn up between the Victoria University of Manchester and the Corporation in 1978 reveals that it continued to be associated with children until its very recent history and indeed was to be maintained as a children’s park. The production of a copse on the mound reduced the amount of open green space for sport, yet this was preferred to the creation of a gymnasium or lawn area. This once again followed the idea that children required more wild spaces to play and that this need apparently superseded the need for them to play sports. This is interesting given the emphasis on boys and girls playing sport in school settings at this time, a subject which will be discussed in more length in Chapter 5. The connection of children with trees could be linked into the idea of recapitulation. Recapitulation is the idea that ‘the stages of childhood re-enacted the forms of our animal or savage ancestors’ lives’. Children’s surgeon Louis Robinson wrote of his experiments in this field in 1892. He found that ‘the titillation of the palms of the hands and soles of the feet of young infants at once sets to work the grasping muscles of the fingers and toes, which in the new born ape are so virtually necessary in enabling it to cling to its dam’. Accompanying his written findings was an image taken of newborn babies clinging onto a tree branch complete with leaves (see figure 3.14). This deliberate use of a tree branch, as opposed to a pole, is undoubtedly as Sally Shuttleworth puts it ‘to enable readers more easily to imagine babies as young monkeys swinging through their arboreal habitat’.

60 MS Agreement, WPTA-075.
64 Shuttleworth, p. 274.
Whether evolutionary or not, the image of children swinging through tree branches was certainly real enough to ensure that the bye-laws of Whitworth Park forbade this very activity.\textsuperscript{65} Shuttleworth’s investigation into the scientific study of children during the nineteenth century, highlights how the notion of recapitulation encapsulated an idea of the child as the ‘embodiment both of all past history and as an expression of future possibility’.\textsuperscript{66} G. Stanley Hall, a proponent of the recapitulation theory, explored this notion in some depth. He laid out an education grounded in nature and the Arcadian past, and warns of the dangers to the future if this is not undertaken. If children are allowed their animalistic, savage and natural childhood, then the future would be positive.


\textsuperscript{65} ‘Summary’, \textit{Manchester Courier}, 16 June 1890, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{66} Shuttleworth, p. 267.
Figure 3.15: (Not attributed), *Whitworth Park Bandstand* (1906). Postcard. Rusholme Archive. The benches in the background face towards the bandstand. The trees on the mound are clearly young saplings.

Figure 3.16: (Not attributed), *Formal Planting at Whitworth Park* (circa 1911). Postcard. Rusholme Archive.
Figure 3.15 shows children sitting on the slopes of the mound, facing the bandstand. Some adults also occupy the grass behind them while many more occupy benches on the hard surface immediately around the bandstand and towards the lake side. This is the only available image of the mound and is useful in demonstrating two key points. The first being that the trees were very young still, unlikely candidates for swinging on or climbing at this stage of their growth, and secondly that the grassy area of the mound seems not to have been restricted to the public; the children sprawled on the grass in a manner which contrasts strongly with the formal poses of those sitting on the benches beyond. We are able to use these points alongside a consideration of children’s literature to help derive an idea of the ways in which children may have used the space. It is worth noting that, as in adult fiction, the presentation of space is fundamentally important to the creation of the natural child in children’s fiction. Child characters in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century children’s fiction are physically located a garden or wilderness spaces, removed from and often inaccessible to adults.\textsuperscript{67} They not only occupy unique spaces but they also have a very direct and active engagement with the landscape, often growing and planting things or living off the land directly. The more relaxed poses shown in this photo echo the deeper interaction allowed with nature, in this case the grass, in this wilderness space, than is possible in the formal, cultivated spaces represented in figure 3.16.

This interaction with the natural space takes place both physically and in an imaginary way, illustrated best in the fiction of Richard Jefferies. In \textit{Wood Magic} (1881), Bevis is a young boy, perhaps only 7 or 8, and the story follows his adventures in and around the farm in which he lives. The garden immediately surrounding the house is a space separate from his parents and guardians who we only encounter in the house itself. Bevis spends much of his time in the garden or meadow beyond, but is constantly pushing at the boundaries of his known landscape, seeking to explore and learn more of the surrounding areas, separating himself from the adult spaces of the farm.\textsuperscript{68} As he distances himself further, he becomes increasingly entangled in the lives and politics of the creatures of the wood which serves as the extent of his wanderings.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{67} For example, Dieter Petzold, ‘A Race Apart: Children in Late Victorian and Edwardian Children’s Books,’ \textit{Children’s Literature Association Quarterly} 17 (3) (1992), pp. 33-36.


the potential for children to play at a distance from their parents and guardians. While figure 3.15 shows the base of the mound where it intersected with the adult spaces around the bandstand and lake, the space at the summit of the slope, as well as that on the far side of the summit, offered privacy and strengthened the opportunity to interact with nature. It is likely that the space around the children formed part of their play, an assumption shared by newspaper journalists of the time who imagined the ‘grassy slopes and sheltered nooks’ being an ideal playground for children.70

In Bevis: Story of a Boy (1882) Jefferies sets out his own understanding of how this may occur. Bevis and his friend Mark explore a much larger landscape than the Bevis of Wood Magic, yet their way of viewing their landscape is also of primary interest to us here. This is perhaps best illustrated early on in the book when Bevis walks into the parlour and involuntarily pulls out and opens an old book.

Bevis’ fingers went direct to the rhyme he had read so often, and in an instant everything around him disappeared, room and bookcase and the garden without...he could see the ‘bolde men in their deeds’, he could see the harper and the minstrel’s song, the sound of trumpet and the clash of steel.71

Jones highlights how in children’s fiction the child protagonists often overlay ‘real’ landscapes with ‘imaginative reinterpretations where the children (or the author on their behalf) re-fictionalise their adventures into other narratives’.72 He uses Arthur Ransome’s Swallows and Amazons (1930) as an example where children in a fictionalised Lake District landscape are simultaneously engaging with an imaginative narrative of pirates and treasure. For Bevis and his friends the landscape is layered with their imagination so that an oak tree in the wood becomes an eleven-thousand-year-old banyan in the jungle,73 a stream becomes alternately the Nile, the Amazon and the Mississippi, and the lake is many seas all at the same time. Within children’s fiction, the countryside is a particularly significant site for this to occur, as Jones writes, it provides ‘not only the fictional physical space for

70 ‘The Whitworth Park’, The Manchester Examiner and Times, 12 July 1890, p. 3.
73 Jefferies, Bevis, p. 50.
adventure, but also the imaginative, even mystical space in which such narratives can unfold unimpinged by the jarring nature of much of everyday life. Everyday life in this context clearly relates to the urban environment in which most children lived. Natural landscapes in fiction are sought out by child characters for imaginative play, and while children outside of fiction were by no means simply the real counterparts of adult-drawn child characters, they would have been undoubtedly influenced and inspired by the potential for imaginative play within the park landscape. This may have been the re-enactment of adventure stories or fairy tales as Jefferies imagines or it may have been simply that the wildlife and vegetation present in these spaces would have been incorporated into children’s play in an imaginative manner to act as characters in their fantasies or as props within a game. The separation of wilderness spaces from formal, adult spaces, as well as the privacy offered to those playing there, may have further facilitated this imaginative play, while the informality of the spaces lent itself to less structured activity and also to less structured movement. Perhaps most gratifying for those who designed the parks and who encouraged learning through labelling, plants, animals and vegetation both native and exotic could be observed and handled closely. This observation and contact with animals will now be discussed in greater depth.

3.3 Animals

Figure 3.17: (Not attributed), Elephant ride – Regents Park Zoo (Date Unknown). Photograph. The Keasbury-Gordon Photographic Archive 2012.

The provision of wilderness spaces, alongside the more cultivated forms of planting, provided just one element of the contact with nature which educationalists from the Romantic to the late-Victorian period advocated for the creation of healthy childhoods. Alongside the vast and varied wildlife which occurred organically in parks, designers and patrons of these spaces often sought to include animals as part of the contrived layout. In his 1898 study of London parks, J. J. Sexby wrote repeatedly how ‘bird and animal life is much encouraged’ through the creation of aviaries and animal houses, ‘much to the amusement of the youthful generation’. 75 Victoria Park in London for example contained ‘pigeons and doves, chaffinches, linnets, greenfinches, and a pair of golden pheasants’ in the aviary, whilst guinea-pigs, goats and deer also featured and were especially popular with

children. Some parks, like Clissold Park, wanted to go further. Embracing a protocol set forth by zoological gardens, they considered providing ‘elephant and camel rides for juvenile visitors’ before practical considerations meant that this was rejected. Clissold Park may not have offered elephant rides, but the zoo in Regents Park did: figure 3.17 shows a ride through the park. This was certainly a novelty, indeed the main focus of the image is in the comic juxtaposition between the gentleman going about his business and the elephant close behind. Parks were clearly considered a place to encounter wildlife and that Clissold Park even considered offering attractions of this kind suggests that had cost not been a factor, many more parks might have considered offering exotic animal rides. Not all animals were placed in cages; ornamental lakes and ponds were populated with ducks, swans and other wetland fowl. Furthermore, where parks lay on the outskirts of a town, large grassed areas were grazed by sheep, deer or cattle in order to keep the grass low.

The inclusion of animals in public park spaces was a continuation of a tradition begun by zoological gardens. Set up in 1828, the gardens of the Zoological Society of London (now London Zoo), was the first of its kind in Britain. This was joined in the 1830s by zoos in Manchester, Dublin and Bath. The 11th edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, published in 1910 and 1911, stated that the primary purpose of these zoos was to ‘gratify the pleasure most persons take in viewing at close range the curious and beautiful living products of nature’. In other words, they sought to provide entertainment by displaying natural and wild animals in close proximity. There was also a strong educational element to their creation and certainly early on in its history the Zoological Society of London saw itself as primarily a research and science facility. Historian Robert W. Jones, notes how this gradually gave way to a new emphasis on spectacle in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Birds and mammals were by far the most common type of animal in captivity, while large

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76 Sexby, p. 557.
77 Sexby, p. 322.
cats, followed by monkeys, were the most popular. Drawing on this tradition, it may be supposed that public parks sought to include animals, both for amusement, but also for educational purposes. All of the case study parks provided the opportunity to encounter animals, whether or not they provided a specific built environment for them. Whitworth Park for example was praised for the diversity of its bird life despite not housing an aviary. Lakes were not built specifically for fowl, however a 1911 postcard of Whitworth Park refers to the lake as the ‘duck pond’, despite no ducks being visible in the image. Figure 3.21 meanwhile depicts swans in Greenhead Park. Both of these images perhaps suggest at how the potential for encountering birds on the lake was part of the attraction of the landscape feature. Furthermore, Roundwood Park and Greenhead Park hosted a local agricultural show from early on in their history, providing the chance to see livestock classes take place. Saltwell Park and Greenhead Park however, perhaps owing to their greater size, provided visitors with further opportunity to encounter animals, brought into the space deliberately, either as grazing animals or as animals in captivity. These spaces, the choices of animal and the way in which they reflected on the notion of a natural child will now be discussed in depth. The presence of pasture animals like sheep, deer and horses, semi-domesticated birds like ducks, swans and pheasants, and wild animals kept in cages such as birds and monkeys, alongside the native bird species present in the park, will be useful to reflect on the ways in which notions of wild and cultivated spaces could be expressed in ways other than by the planting already discussed.

Both Greenhead Park and Saltwell Park included within their designs large open spaces referred to as the playing fields or playgrounds. By naming these spaces as such it is clear they were intended for children to run around in. In both parks, the area was almost entirely encircled by pathways with benches set out at regular intervals, providing excellent views over the space. This would have allowed parents and guardians to watch children play, without having to themselves walk onto the grass, again indicating that this was a space reserved for children. However, in both parks sheep were brought in to graze these areas (see figure 3.18). Saltwell Park also grazed deer and the park pony alongside these sheep on the playing field, quite significantly reducing the space available for children’s play.

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Given that these areas were named the playing fields, and therefore presumably intended for children’s play, there was an assumption made that children would be able to play alongside the grazing animals. This corresponded to the notion that children were themselves animal-like, a belief prevalent in both the educational and fictional literature of the time. Where this view was present in adult fiction it often served to separate children out as something ‘other’ to adults, free from the constraints of society. George Eliot’s *Mill on the Floss* (1860) has perhaps one of the best early examples of this distinction. Her two main characters, Maggie and Tom are frequently depicted as animalistic when young, much to the concern of their sociable aunts who seek to civilise Maggie in particular; the natural child was still gendered it seems. As the narrator puts it:

> We [adults] no longer approximate in our behaviour to the mere impulsiveness of the lower animals, but conduct ourselves in every respect like members of a highly civilized society. Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals.  

The children are not just *like* animals but they are also able to utilise their animal tendencies to their advantage. Tom’s young friend Bob for example is able to set his eye ‘like an amphibious animal’ when hunting along the floss for rats. Maggie and Tom meanwhile are able to escape the company of their aunts with the ‘alacrity of small animals’. Children were viewed then as being not only animalistic but also able to adapt in an animalistic way to their environment. As G. Stanley Hall suggested, the field was the natural home of the child.

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85 Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, p. 44.
87 G. S. Hall, *Youth*, p. 4.
Children playing alongside the grazing animals may have been the ideal; however the reality was somewhat different. In Greenhead Park it appeared that children were prevented from playing on the playground, as stated in an 1886 letter to the *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*. The writer complained that ‘a portion called the playground is used for agricultural purposes...could it not be given up to its legitimate use, where children can run about and enjoy themselves without being ruthlessly told to keep off the grass?’ In Saltwell Park concern seemed directed the other way as a complaint was raised in 1906 of children chasing the sheep in the playground. Children and animals being unable use the same space in the park does not seem surprising. The decision to allow grazing animals onto playgrounds is interesting therefore and the justification for it seems to be partly financial and partly idealistic. Large lawn mowers, to be pulled by horses were available and used at Saltwell Park, while smaller grassy areas were maintained as lawns through the use of small hand-pushed mowers. It would have be feasible, albeit time-consuming to mow these large play areas in order to allow exclusive access to children. Grazing the area took away from the labour costs associated with mowing this space. Grazing sheep may have also brought in a small rental income for the corporations. By contrast, the deer donated to

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88 ‘Peoples’ Park, Greenhead’, *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 1 July 1886, p. 3.
89 TW-CB.SU/41-8, 20 June 1906.
90 Lang, p. 44.
Saltwell Park, would not have: there were only two deer and no mention of a breeding programme for them. It is perhaps ironic that these animals were removed in 1889 after a stag gored a visitor and subsequently cost the council a significant fee in litigation costs. These deer evoked the designs of private park landscapes, while the bucolic image of sheep grazing in the landscape further evoked notions of the pastoral which parks were keen to demonstrate. Sheep grazing may have further drawn on the idea of common grazing. Public parks, like common land were owned privately, but with the free right of use by the ‘commoner’. Due to the Enclosure Acts of 1750 to 1860 much common land was no longer in use and this deliberate act of providing park land for grazing could be seen as a sign of the nostalgia for the pre-industrial past which underpinned much of the public park movement. Children seemed to embody this nostalgia for a simpler past and their supposed connection with pasture-grazing animals was here materialised in the dual purpose of these spaces.

The most successful grazing animals kept in the case study parks were the succession of Saltwell Park ponies, kept to keep the grass down and to produce manure. Following an injury to one pony in 1892, the decision was taken to put the animal down. It was felt that in order not to upset the children who visited the park, a replacement must be quickly found. This process was repeated in 1915 following the death of the replacement park pony, this time due to old age. This concern over the children’s responses to the death of the pony seemed to be the only consideration worthy of discussion in the Park Committee Meeting Minutes regarding these events, underlining the popularity of these animals with children. The reason for this may have been less that they were grazed on the playing field, and more to do with the fact that they were stabled in the area behind the house. This area also housed the aviaries and the monkey house, and as such was an area designed for the interaction of children with animals. As stated above the primary purpose for housing caged animals in parks seemed to be for the ‘amusement’ and education of children. By stabling the ponies here, alongside the purpose built aviary and monkey house, the park officials were not just making the most of the existing private estate buildings, but were also encouraging an interaction between the public and these animals.

91 Lang, p. 46.
92 TW-CB.SU/41-5, 19 October 1892.
93 TW-CB.SU/41-12, 24th February 1915.
94 Sexby, p. 557.
Aviaries were fairly common in parks throughout Britain and while the monkey house of Saltwell Park was perhaps more of an oddity, countless other animals were kept in parks, with guinea pigs, ferrets and rabbits perhaps being the most common. Saltwell Park did house a racoon but this was donated to the London Zoo in 1891 when it was resolved that never again would a vicious animal be kept in the park.95 A jackal was also disposed of earlier on in the park’s history in 1881, at the same time that the duck and geese population was reduced.96 As the map above (figure 3.19) shows, the animal area was situated adjacent to both the informal Dene and to the formal gardens which occupied the southernmost section of the park; the first area encountered by visitors entering through the southern

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95 TW-CB.SU/41-4,1891.
96 TW-CB.SU/41-3,1881.
gate. This placement of animals seems to underline the intersection between the wild and the domesticated. These animals were not allowed to roam freely, unlike the sheep or deer. Instead the animals were situated near to the house, making use of existing stables and creating new built environments for them. The aviaries are also placed near the lodge house and greenhouses in Roundwood Park (see appendix 4), and at Clissold Park (well known for its animal attractions) the animal enclosures are near the refreshment rooms and main gates (see figure 3.20). Housing the animals in this area of Saltwell Park was not purely for convenience purposes. Placing wild animals in these quasi-domestic settings, rather than in wilder parts of the park, may have aimed to domesticate them, at least figuratively. By placing them close to human housing the implication is that these animals have become tamed to be useful, much like a horse is broken in and becomes an essential part of the estate household, living next to or close to the main house, rather than with the cattle in the pasture land further away. This usefulness could be for entertainment or perhaps for education, an idea drawing once more from the zoological gardens. Interestingly it seems that even if entertainment or education had been the purpose of housing animals in the parks, the animals still could shock the visitors by acting naturally, suggesting that the attempted domestication process was not wholly successful. Rather than be removed to spaces further away from the house, like the sheep and deer, animals that were not sufficiently rehabilitated in domestic spaces were removed. The vicious racoon removed from Saltwell Park was preceded in 1880 by the removal of all male monkeys who were charged with inappropriate behaviour.97 This inappropriate behaviour, not engaged in by female monkeys, and the violent behaviour of the racoon were sufficient reasons for these creatures to be removed, even though it is unlikely that visitors would have been directly harmed by these caged animals. This suggests that the park designers expected the animals to change their natural behaviour and to only act out approved behaviours, as sanctioned by their environment.

97 TW-CB.SU/41-3, October 1880.
Figure 3.20: OS Map, Section of OS Map showing animal enclosures in Clissold Park, London (1910s). Digimap.

Given the emphasis on children’s entertainment and education in these caged animal areas, as well as the aforementioned popularity of theories of recapitulation, which likened children to un-evolved primates, it is tempting to draw comparisons between the idea of domesticating the caged wild animals, and domesticating children. Certainly the idea that children, being wild animals, required domesticating was prevalent in fiction as well as in the work of educationalists such as Hall and Herbert Spencer. In The Little White Bird (1902) J. M. Barrie takes this metaphor further and not only are his fictional children like animals, but they begin life as birds and need to be caught, not an easy feat as ‘children in
the bird stage are difficult to catch’, and then domesticated.98 Children in the story are readily in search of their freedom once more and indeed Peter Pan, who makes his first appearance in this story, ‘escaped from being a human when he was seven days old’99 and makes his way back to live in Kensington Gardens. Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) also explores the notions of wild/domestic and animal/children. While his characters of Ratty, Mole, Badger and Toad are all of course wild animals, they exist not just in homes, but in perfectly domesticated spaces. Badger’s kitchen for example contained ‘bundles of dried herb’, hams hung overhead and a dresser full of plates.100 Yet despite these possessions, the animals still rely on their natural, animal instincts to navigate and to assist them in their adventures.101 The narrative of Toad in the book serves as a cautionary tale as he seeks to shed his animal behaviour completely and take up the human behaviour of driving. The lesson intended here for the reader is to perhaps accept what is natural in oneself. Literary critics such as Peter Hunt have read into *The Wind in the Willows* nostalgia for a declining rural past, and Badger’s country kitchen seeming to support this plausible argument.102 The reoccurrence of this pervasive theme once again demonstrates how the link between children and nature was as much a critique on contemporary society as it was a legacy of the Romantic period.

Debates exist over whether or not *The Wind in the Willows* was intended for adults or for children, yet it is overwhelmingly true that the book was read mostly by children and continues to be so.103 Furthermore the story was compiled from letters written to Grahame’s young son, whose boasting, Gillian Avery notes, seems to be formative in creating the character of Toad.104 Further debates surround the identification of the characters as children, adults or animals. Peter Hunt for example claims in his definitive work on this book that the characters are adults not animals.105 Elizabeth Hale agrees with this to a point, claiming that it is Ratty and Mole’s refusal to give in to their natural animal

99 Barrie, p. 132.
101 An example of this is when Mole rediscovers the home he left a year previously by using his superior sense of smell; p. 53.
105 Hunt, pp.13-22.
instincts, albeit sometimes unsuccessful, which makes them adults, even though still animals.\textsuperscript{106} Yet these animals are often childlike, not just in their inability to control their natural instincts; after Mole’s first trip to the Wild Wood, where they finally find Badger’s home, having wandered scared and lost all night, they revel in ‘how jolly it was to be sitting up so late, and so independent, and so full’.\textsuperscript{107} This is an interesting passage, revelling both in the adult’s ability to be independent, but also in the uniqueness and excitement of this moment. It is perhaps best understood by postulating that if these characters are adults, then the book is about understanding adults, their roles and responsibilities. That the book ultimately became a children’s book, regardless of the author’s own view on this debate, suggests that adults buying the book felt that children could comprehend adult actions best when portrayed through animal characters, once again affirming the child’s natural understanding of animals. The scene in Badger’s kitchen sees the adult animals both as a strange other, independent and grown up, but also as a co-conspirator, the child’s literary hero partaking in midnight feasts and adventures. Indeed, the fact that the animals recognise the novelty of being independent suggests that the understanding between animals and children works both ways. The book in this way allows children to recognise that they are not yet adults, but also aspire to be successful, civilised adults, without having to engage with the realities of adult life. The adult animal is a midway point in this process of self-identification.

The connection between the wild and the domestic, the animal and the child seems to be profound in Grahame’s book as in others. Hale highlights how this is a particularly Edwardian way of viewing childhood. She states that ‘the emphasis of the child as part of nature, as ruthlessly truthful regardless of whether he is good or bad, on the importance of desires, drives and instincts, as opposed to the comprised nature of socialised adult existence, is what distinguishes the Edwardian vision of childhood’.\textsuperscript{108} As mentioned, the adult animal intersects these two positions, potentially suggesting that children must learn to act as adult animals, before they can act as civilised adults. This seems to be materialised in the park landscape. Animals demonstrated the instinctive behaviour which children were

\textsuperscript{107} Grahame, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{108} Hale, pp. 204-205.
to embrace. Children might roam and play freely with the sheep and deer or else watch at close hand the varied wild birds, learn semi-domesticated behaviours through watching the caged animals and petting the park ponies, or other domesticated creatures, and eventually would become themselves civilised and domesticated as adults. It is perhaps an interesting parallel to highlight how monkey parades, which went on throughout the late-nineteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century, seem to reflect this animalistic progression. Mainly the preserve of older teenagers, and therefore outside the remit of this work, a monkey parade was a gathering of youths in the streets of the town to observe members of the opposite sex.¹⁰⁹ Rowdy and potentially sexualised in nature, these monkey parades reflect a stage in-between the animal-like child and the civilised adult. They could perhaps be characterised as the adult animals children must become before they are able to transition to human adulthood. Interestingly, as Jenny Birchall’s work on monkey parades shows, these events were seen as morally abhorrent by some and it was felt that the exposure to the public of sexualised behaviour of the male participants would irrevocably corrupt the females, revealing fears and concerns over female roles in public spaces.¹¹⁰ Simon Gunn’s work on middle-class ‘mapping’ of public space considers the way working-class monkey parades threatened middle-class perceptions of city landscapes.¹¹¹ This is particularly relevant in the park setting which was a significant site of middle-class public culture and consumption. His work reveals how working-class sexuality was seen as particularly dangerous to female morality. The removal of male monkeys from Saltwell Park reflects this crisis over male sexuality and the potential corruption of female innocence in the park, it was after all the male monkeys only who were removed. The adult animals that were deemed essential for the education and development of the child in the park were subject to strong regulation and control. While the monkey house could not successfully domesticate the male monkeys, it could certainly domesticate the female, providing a potent allegory for the park’s intended role in cultivating middle-class feminine values in working-class girls.

¹¹⁰ J. Birchall, p. 231.
Access to wild animals was available in the park not just through aviaries and caged areas. The parks contained countless animals, particularly birds, which colonised the space as their habitat. Some of these were introduced, such as the ducks, swans and fish added to the ornamental lakes, while many native birds arrived of their own accord (see figure 3.21). As mentioned above, a fascination with natural history prompted many children to create their own collections. Throughout the period newspapers reported on countless prosecutions of children stealing bird’s eggs. Furthermore, prosecutions were brought against children stealing duck eggs, catching, and killing animals in the parks. Gateshead Council Park Committee made a compulsory commitment for school teachers to educate their students to protect the wildlife of the parks. These events seem to stand at odds with the notion that children were more in-tune with nature and had an affinity with animals, although taps into the more savage, brutal depiction of nature already discussed.

112 Examples include: ‘Stealing Eggs’, Hartlepool Mail, 6 April 1891, p. 3; ‘Stealing Eggs’, Shields Daily Gazette, 8 May 1872, p. 2;
114 TW-CB.SU/41-10, May 1910.
The most striking fictional image of children’s special bond with nature is undoubtedly the figure of Dickon in Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *The Secret Garden* (1910). Throughout the book he is depicted as a child who is instinctively in-touch with nature, who charms animals (and humans) and who appears at times as a benevolent apparition of the god Pan.\(^\text{115}\) It is through Dickon that Mary learns to tend the plants and animals within her secret garden and to begin her own transformation into a natural child. While Dickon represents an affinity with nature, he is not the model of a natural child that Burnett wishes to promote, hence his secondary role in the book where Mary and Colin are the main characters. While Mary and Colin are confined to the house on rainy days, Dickon continues to tend his other garden on the moor and to visit his animal friends there. He is not constrained by the weather in the way that the other two children are. Mary and Colin make plans to visit the Sowerby’s cottage on the moor, yet the arrival home of Archibald Craven signals the end of the book before this is achieved. We are left understanding that while Dickon, his mother and sister Martha, as well as the gardener Ben Weatherstaff, are moor people, Mary and Colin are not and perhaps are unlikely to become so. This difference is undoubtedly based on class and while Mary and Colin affect a Yorkshire accent while in the garden, they will never be working-class and would not want to be, as evidenced in Colin’s horror at Ben’s suggestion that he becomes a boxer.\(^\text{116}\) While the moor is the wild natural space which has allowed working-class Dickon to develop as the book’s perfect specimen of a ‘natural child,’ it is the semi-domestic walled garden which is the most suitable and beneficial place for the middle-class Mary and Colin. Domesticity and society has stolen the health of these two children, yet they do not need to become ‘wild’ uncivilised natural children in order to regain it. Nature which is sanctioned, tame, controlled, and regulated is depicted here as being as beneficial as the wilder aspects of it.

In order to perfect this cultivated access to nature, the wilder aspects of children’s behaviour might have to be controlled. The fictional character of Bevis in *Wood Magic* might have been closer to the Edwardian image of the natural child in his relationship to animals than the figure of Dickon. As discussed above, Hale demonstrates that the Edwardian natural child is a complex mix of good and bad, caring and brutal. Bevis is, like Dickon, able

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\(^\text{116}\) Burnett, p. 309.
to communicate with nature and has a well-developed knowledge and appreciation for
animals and plants, yet he also displays a destructive side to his nature. He throws his knife
at a swallow for contradicting him, throws a stick at a young colt for starting away from him,
chases the hens, and having defended his dog against the beating he received earlier in the
day, he then teases the dog with a bone just out of reach.\(^{117}\) Bevis encompasses the brutal
side of nature as well as the good. He is not a sentimental and whimsical child but is, rather
like Mary and Colin, a complex character, both good and bad. Having thrown the knife at the
swallow, he begins collecting cowslips for his mother before promptly laying down on the
grass and declaring to the sky ‘sky...I love you like I love my mother’.\(^{118}\) The animals in the
tale are also a complex mix of bad and good, the birds discuss the virtues of fighting, yet we
are told that they fight because they love one another.\(^{119}\) The child and the animals’
behaviour within the book mirror one another. This imagined image of a natural child, at
once in tune with nature and yet also brutal, was acceptable only in books it seems. The
accounts of children chasing sheep and stealing bird’s eggs are reported seriously in the
parks committee meeting minutes.

Historian Fred Milton has suggested that there was an increased public concern for
the welfare and protection of wildlife during the late-Victorian and Edwardian era,
illustrated by the creation of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, along with the
introduction of legislation protecting birds, and crucially, the institution of a number of
societies for children with the express purpose of ‘teaching children to be kind to wildlife’.\(^{120}\)
It was children’s cruelty to animals, in particular through the stealing of eggs, which was
being specifically addressed here. The Dicky Bird Society, set up in 1876 by William Adams,
the editor of the \textit{Newcastle Weekly Chronicle}, was an extremely popular example of such a
society. With over 300,000 supporters nationwide by 1900, the children who joined the
society pledged ‘to be kind to all living things, to protect them to the utmost of (their)
power, to feed the birds in the winter time, and never to take or destroy a nest’.\(^{121}\) The fact
that this society felt that children had to be taught how to treat animals kindly highlights

\(^{118}\) Jefferies, \textit{Wood Magic}, p. 15.
\(^{120}\) Fredrick Stephen Milton, \textit{Taking The Pledge : A Study of Children’s Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to
\(^{121}\) Milton, p. 169.
how the natural child figure of the late-Victorian and Edwardian period was not the same as the Romantic version, but as stated above, was furnished with the unsavoury elements of the wild as much as the good. Nevertheless, in focusing on children’s behaviour toward animals, the reformers reveal their vision of a harmonious relationship between children and the natural world, perhaps battling the more brutal elements of a child’s nature in doing so.

As has become clear throughout this section, many parks provided visitor access to animals, often deliberately, and in many cases with the express purpose of providing pleasure, entertainment, and education to children. In doing so they engaged with an ideological rendering of the child as natural, undomesticated and complex, having an affinity for, a fascination with and a sometimes antagonistic relationship with animals. The placement, choice and interaction with animals in the park revealed attempts to shape and influence children’s behaviours and identity, highlighting gender, class and age differences, as well as positioning the human child in relationship to the animal kingdom. While the natural child was in some ways indulged through this use of animals as a pedagogical tool, it was also subject to strong regulation and to changes in attitudes towards practices of collection and personal curation.

3.4 Water

Late-Victorian and Edwardian public parks contained many different types of water features, from drinking fountains and ornamental water features, to boating lakes and fish ponds. Many sought to incorporate all of these features into their park design, regardless of the size of the park. Whitworth Park, for example, had two drinking fountains and the boating lake contained a large elaborate fountain within its parameter. Where size allowed some larger parks included water features designed to look natural, like the stream running through the Dene in Saltwell Park, and the Rebecca at the Well feature in Greenhead Park. Drinking fountains, lakes and natural water features will be discussed in depth here, taking into consideration, what archaeologist Joanna Brück refers to, in her study of Ireland’s public parks, as ‘the symbolic links between water, cleanliness and morality so frequently
made in Victorian art, literature and social commentary’. This section will elaborate on these links, suggesting how the built environment of the park landscapes reflected these ideals and how they structured the visitor’s engagement with the space, with particular reference to the natural child.

Figure 3.22: Reeves and Sons Limited (publishers), *Roundwood Park, Willesden* (1905). Postcard. Brent Council Image and Photograph Collection.

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Figure 3.23: (Not attributed), *The Temperance Society Fountain, Greenhead Park* (Unknown). Photograph. Kirklees Image Archive.

Figure 3.24: (Unknown) *Charlton Memorial, Saltwell Park* (1950). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies.
Figure 3.25: Vivien Teasdale, *The Ramsden Drinking Fountain*, *Greenhead Park* (2010). Photograph. www.parksandgardens.org

Figure 3.26: (Not attributed), *Band of Hope Medallion* (Nineteenth Century). Photograph. <http://westberkshirewarmemorials.org.uk/texts/stories/WBP01191S.php>
Drinking fountains were extremely commonplace additions to park design in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods. As is clear from the images above, the designs of these fountains varied considerably, yet they invariably reference church architecture, including through the use of gothic vaulting (figures 3.24 and 3.25), pitched roofs and weather vanes (figure 3.22), or the slightly less elaborate use of Christian symbols on the temperance society drinking fountain in Greenhead Park (figure 3.23); the temperance society itself being strongly associated with various Christian movements. The symbol placed within the middle of the Greenhead Park temperance drinking fountain is the same symbol used on a popular Band of Hope pledge medal, awarded to children who had taken the pledge of abstinence (see figure 3.26). As noted in chapter one, parks were seen to provide alternative and temperate sites of leisure to the public house and the music hall. Cultural geographer Peter Bailey’s seminal 1987 work on ‘rational recreation’ can be credited with highlighting the class tensions which underpinned Victorian debates on leisure and for highlighting the particularly middle-class Victorian notion that recreation could be used to impart a moral message and to bring about behavioural change. While later historians have critiqued elements of Bailey’s work, his failure to adequately discuss women’s roles in this moral programme for example, his work still heavily informs our understanding of Victorian leisure. The park was not only an alternative venue for leisure, but part of a wider moral message about appropriate behaviours. Declining rates of church attendance throughout the nineteenth century was linked by some to the drinking of alcohol on Saturdays. The temperance movement, which was gathering support throughout the later part of the century, had a strong religious message. The public park was therefore not just a morally superior alternative to the pub, but was also a more Christian activity. The provision of, and indeed drinking of, fresh, clean water in the park was a symbolic act of temperance and faith.

Children were a crucial part of this religious message both within the park and without. As sociologist Lucy Bailey argues, ‘children were considered particularly important

123 P. Bailey, Leisure and Class.
weapons in the battle for temperance’. She notes that children were depicted in temperance propaganda both as innocents requiring protection from the evils of drink, and the embodiment of future hope. The message was that children’s participation in the temperance movement ensured the moral and spiritual well being of the future citizens of Britain. Children’s participation in the temperance movement was most obvious in the successful and widespread Band of Hope movement, which set out to protect children from the dangers associated with their parent’s drinking. This movement not only educated the children in the evils of drink, but formed bands which frequently performed in the parks. The park visitor would have been familiar with the sight of children performing with these brass bands on a Sunday. Furthermore, the drinking fountains in parks, which were often donated either by temperance groups or by philanthropic individuals who supported the temperance movement, were frequently depicted in postcards and images surrounded by children (see figure 3.27). In deliberately situating children next to these fountains for the purposes of creating a postcard or photograph, the link between children, water as a healthy alternative to alcohol and Christian faith seems to be made permanent. Children perform an almost redemptive role in the Christian temperance message, acting as a sort of reminder for adults to ‘think of the children,’ whether through the visible cue of the postcard or the aural cue of the music played in the park.

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Charles Kingsley’s fictional work *The Water-Babies* (1863) unites the themes of water, religion and the redemptive power of children. Tom, the main protagonist of the story, is a poor, irreligious, orphan who drowns, dies and becomes a water baby in order to learn various moralistic lessons, taught to him by witch-like creatures with names like Mrs Bedonebyasyoudid, and talking animals and fish.\(^{127}\) Kingsley engages with notions of recapitulation within the tale as well as the idea of natural cause and effect, which suggested that humans could devolve as well as evolve.\(^{128}\) Children are positioned as the apex of this evolutionary potential and therefore it is their education which is crucial for the future of the species. Once again it is animals that provide the education, demonstrating once again the notion that children and animals shared an affinity and a natural propensity for both the good and bad parts of nature. Kingsley, a clergyman, sought to unite the Darwinian theories he supported with religion, and Tom’s ultimate rebirth, rising up out of the water as an adult, a scientist, and the possessor of a rational and progressive mind, has


\(^{128}\) Kingsley, p. 46-8.
religious connotations. The water in the story not only acts as Tom’s home throughout the tale, and the home of the animals he communicates with, but it also acts as a tool by which to purify, and morally educate the boy. The tale acts as a parallel to the baptism process which takes place at these symbolic drinking fountains in the park, with their often font-like appearance. The child is inducted here in a ‘natural,’ moralistic and religious education via the drinking fountain’s water. Tom’s frantic desire to wash himself in order to reach the imaginary church of his delirium, immediately before his fall into the river and death, also offers up a useful parallel to the stated importance of cleanliness and respectable appearance impressed upon children entering the public park. Whitworth Park’s byelaws stated along with others that no-one who was offensively dirty may enter the park gates. Water acts once again as a purification, albeit here in a physical manner. The notion that a clean body would in turn lead to a clean mind was a well-established notion which Kingsley articulated in his sermons as ‘if you will only wash your bodies, your souls will be alright’.

For Romantics, the wonder and awe at natural beauty took on a spiritual meaning: a transcendental significance which Wordsworth refers to when writing of ‘a presence that disturbs me with the joy, of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime, of something far more deeply interfused’. Their dissatisfaction with increasing urbanisation and their elevation of the rural and natural is summed up in William Cowper’s epic eighteenth-century poem The Task. His lines ‘God made the country, and man-made the town, what wonder, then, that health and virtue, gifts that can alone make sweet the bitter draught that life holds out to all, should most abound and least be threatened in the fields and groves’, again highlights the connection made between what was natural, religious and good. Coleridge’s poem, ‘Frost at Midnight’ referred to at the start of this chapter, also hints at how the connection with nature, given to a child, could bring them closer together with God. He contrasts his

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130 Kingsley, p. 31.
131 ‘Whitworth Park, Manchester’, The Manchester Courier, 16 June 1890, p. 5.
own urban childhood where he saw ‘naught lovely but the sky and stars’, with the childhood he desires for his child; ‘so shalt thou see and hear, the lovely shapes and sounds intelligible of that eternal language, which thy God utters’. Coleridge’s child is not just natural but deeply spiritual. While the late-Victorian natural child was, as we have seen, less defined by innocence and inherent goodness than the Romantic conception of the same, the connection between the natural child, religion and redemption seemed nevertheless to be significant. Their role in the park, as positioned by adults, seemed to be one of connecting adults to God, in particular through the purifying effects of water.

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Figure 3.28: Lilywhite Ltd (publishers) The Fountain, Greenhead Park, Huddersfield (circa. 1910s). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive.

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The connection between the natural and the spiritual seems to be further explored in the provision of less formal water features. Greenhead Park boasted a rockery which rose up on one side to form a stone wall and arch, complete with water feature known as Rebecca at the Well (see figure 3.28). The imagery taken from the biblical story about Rebecca was perhaps used as a means by which to encourage children to be thoughtful and caring, imparting moral education through the image. Yet this feature also utilised running water, which seemed to have a particular resonance with nature for park designers and writers throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. J. C. Loudon divided water features into two types, the large bodies of water which you could observe from a distance, such as lakes and ponds, and those which you might instead encounter only when close to them, such as ‘springs, rivulets, cascades’.

While the large bodies of water should be subject to careful positioning, he further argued that ‘there is scarcely any situation in which springs, rivulets, &c. may not be placed’. In discussing cascades and waterfalls, of which both Rebecca at the Well and the Dene were designed to emulate, Loudon becomes strikingly poetic, in marked contrast to his usual matter-of-fact style. He describes the noise created by a water fall as ‘borne upon the breeze, its grateful harmony meets the ear in almost every part of the adjacent scenery, in murmurs as varied as their passages through woods and open glades, along the surface of the Dove, under the echoing cliffs of the Tor, or ascending the heights of Abram’.

Evoking the scenery of the Romantic poets Loudon places the specific beauty of the falling water in the sound it makes. While Loudon, Smith and Kemp all share a delight for these effects of running water, it is Kemp who stresses the link between the effect and the picturesque. Running water, whether accompanied by a ruin, a rockery, or a waterfall provided variety in the landscape, the ‘beautiful’, rather than the ‘sublime’. He too emphasises the ‘murmur, and music’ of running water. This noise may well be the source of the spiritual element of the romantic conception of landscape. Children’s books abound with whispering brooks and talking streams offering up knowledge and insight. The Water-babies features a talking river, while

137 Loudon, A Treatise, p. 385.
138 Loudon, A Treatise, p. 396.
140 Kemp, p. 83.
141 Kemp, p. 83.
Bevis receives wisdom from the stream in *Wood Magic*. The river of *The Wind in the Willows* not only allows for a close connection and conversation with nature, and undoubtedly expresses much of the nostalgia for a ‘lost’ rural past which underpinned much fiction of the age, but also provides the book’s protagonists with a spiritual vision of Pan.\(^{142}\) Grahame, who was much inspired by the works of Richard Jefferies, dedicates the entire chapter in which this apparition appears to the natural realism style of Jefferies.\(^{143}\) Natural realism places the thoughts and understanding of mankind at odds with the ongoing reality of the natural world. Bevis is able to escape the human thought of the adults around him and tap into an alternative way of viewing the world, defined by the natural processes around him.

He walked round the garden along beside the box-hedge to the patch by the lilac tree; they were single lilacs, which are much more beautiful than the double, and all bowed down with a mass of bloom. Some rhubarb grew there, and to bring it up faster, they had put a round wooden box on it, hollowed out from the sawn butt of an elm, which was rotten and easily scooped.\(^{144}\)

Likewise in *The Wind in the Willows*, the chapter ‘The Piper at the Gates of Dawn’ offers a break from the self-conscious pursuits of the animals, and instead they experience an awareness of nature and the falling water in particular, which had previously eluded them: ‘The great weir closed the backwater from bank to bank, troubled all the quiet surface with twirling eddies and floating foam-streaks, and deadened all other sounds with its solemn and soothing rumble’.\(^{145}\) It is in this stream that the animals encounter their god. While children playing alongside these park features may not have been expected to undergo divine revelations, the idea that children were able to gain more knowledge from nature than adults, may have inspired the creation of a water feature imparting a moral message.

\(^{142}\) Grahame, pp. 82-3.


\(^{144}\) Jefferies, *Wood Magic*, p. 3.

\(^{145}\) Grahame, p. 81.
Lakes had been a significant feature in private park landscapes since the eighteenth century when the likes of Capability Brown and William Gilpin sought to create bodies of water which looked as if they may have naturally occurred within the landscape. The planting of trees and shrubs around the boundaries of the lake in order to blur them was advised, and considered necessary to achieve this natural look. The emphasis on inartificial looking lakes was altered slightly with the arrival of Loudon’s idea of the ‘gardenesque’. His serpentine lakes aimed to follow natural lines, yet at the same time he felt that they must not be mistaken as natural. By the mid-nineteenth century, park design

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147 Kemp, p. 96.
once again erred in favour of the natural. Water played an important role in Charles H. J. Smith’s formula for design, and in discussing the creation of lakes, he evoked this idea of the natural. Artificial lakes, he argued, were only successful when the creator had studied the naturally occurring lake forms. The aim therefore was to create ‘artificial pieces of water with an inartificial look’. Edward Kemp also aimed to keep the outlines of a lake natural, advocating as Repton had earlier, the planting of ‘trees and shrubs’ around the outsides of the lake, as well as on the islands, so as to hide the boundaries. The creation of lakes in public park spaces was widespread, and wherever space allowed, parks sought to provide the public with access to boating lakes and fish ponds. Greenhead Park, for example, had five lakes of various sizes built by 1900 (see figures 3.29). It is striking to note however that despite the emphasis on natural-looking lakes in the landscape design, all of the lakes in the case study parks seem remarkably artificial, surrounded by paving and largely devoid of close lakeside planting (see figures 3.30-3.33).

Figure 3.30: J. Valentine (Publishers), *The Lake at Whitworth Park* (circa 1900). Postcard. Rusholme Archive.

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149 Kemp, p. 303.
Figure 3.31: (Not attributed), Boating Lake, Greenhead Park (1895). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archives.

Figure 3.32: Mr Smith Carter, Greenhead Park, Huddersfield (1910). Photograph. Kirklees Image Archives.
The lake at Saltwell Park did have some planting in contact with the edge of the lake side, yet given that this park was designed by Edward Kemp, who outlined his preference for natural looking lakes, detailed above, this lake seems to be somewhat of a compromise. The two most natural looking of Greenhead Park’s lakes have an island chain by way of dividing the one lake into two (see figure 3.34). These islands are densely planted and this planting does approach the lake edges. Yet these lakes are still highly artificial, surrounded by paving and wide pathways. While elements of the natural and the wild have been willingly incorporated in other parts of these parks, it seems that the lakes were deliberately designed to look artificial and man-made. Furthermore, they are positioned in close proximity to more formal areas of the park; those in Greenhead Park for example all occupied spaces encountered soon after entering the main gates. Also striking is the relationship between the position of the lakes and the bandstands. In Greenhead Park the bandstand occupies the space in between the lakes (see figure 3.34), in Whitworth Park the bandstand is situated close to the top of the lake, with the pavilion and its associated benches offering views of both the lake and bandstand (3.35), and in Saltwell Park the

Figure 3.33: (Not attributed) The Lake at Saltwell Park (circa. 1900). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies.
bandstand was situated beside the lake before being relocated to the lake island itself (figure 3.36).

Figure 3.34: Mr Smith Carter, Bandstand, Greenhead Park (1910). Photograph. Kirklees Image Archive.

Figure 3.35: (Unknown) The lake at Whitworth Park (circa. 1900). Postcard. Rusholme Archive.
These design choices are significant in aiding our understanding of the space. It is clear from the images of the various park lakes, that children frequently used the spaces immediately beside the lake edges, and far more so than adults. Given that this is the case, and in the knowledge that the park designers visited other parks before completing their park designs, it seems to have been a deliberate choice not to situate the lakes in wilderness spaces, or else in spaces outside of parents and guardians lines of vision. Perhaps the most obvious explanation for this may have been in order to ensure the children’s safety. The proximity to the bandstands may have allowed the parents and guardians of children to listen to the music while also watching their children play at the lake edge. This does not fully explain the countless images of children playing next to water. These images are often candid, unlike the highly staged and still images taken in other areas of the park, including the ‘wilderness’ areas. Given that these lakes were so artificial, against the fashions of landscape design and the prevailing notion of children being associated with nature and the wild, the choice to take photographs of children in this space is unusual. In choosing to take candid shots, the photographer is making a point about how the undisturbed actions of
children are picturesque, interesting or worthy of capture. The children are the subject of the shot rather than the landscape. Indeed the children at the lake are the natural aspect of these photographs. Much like photos of the swans on the lakes, these candid shots were designed to be sold as postcards, converting children’s play into a sight for entertainment and consumption. Like the park animals, children are offered up as wild undomesticated parts of nature for entertainment. The lake side, an artificial space, acts like the man-made habitats which confine the caged animals, and the benches offering views of the lake facilitate the observation of children in their favoured habitat of the park.

3.5 Conclusion

Public parks were designed to allow the public access to nature, which it was believed would be beneficial to the health, spirit and morals of those visiting. Children were thought to benefit especially from this access to nature, stemming from the popular late-Victorian notion of them as animalistic, wild and untamed, instinctive and intuitive. The park designers therefore sought to create park spaces to allow this contact with nature to take place, as well as spaces for children to indulge these particular parts of their character. While park designers drew inspiration and guidance from the landscape designs of private parks and other public green spaces, their interpretation of these designs, along with the constraints of space, money and other competing interests, created highly individual park landscapes. These landscapes provide us with insight into the way in which children were perceived to act, play and learn. This chapter sought to investigate the spatial arrangement of the park in relation to various elements of ‘nature’. The design and location of these spaces reveal ways in which the public and children in particular, were encouraged or discouraged from using certain spaces, and the manner in which they were to do this.

Wilderness spaces frequently featured in park landscapes, even when space was limited. These spaces were situated away from the main entrances of the park and required the visitor to travel through the park in order to reach them. This passage from built formal space to wilderness area, seemed to simulate the journey of those who could afford to travel to the countryside for leisure, while also echoing the private park landscapes of the very wealthy landowners whose homes they may have seen when in the countryside. Parks
provided areas away from the sightlines of the main park promenades, with partial or no
marked boundaries and in doing so gave the child visitor a chance to have contact with
nature limited in other areas of the park. Animals were a significant part of the connection
between the park visitor and the natural world. Caged animals seem to have been added
primarily for the entertainment and education of children, who were thought to require
domesticating. Grazing animals were perhaps seen as a compliment to the spaces of
childhood, evoking pastoral and bucolic sentiment. In this, as in many areas in which the
park seemed to engage with the idea of the natural child, reality proved to be very different
to the ideal. The children did not coexist with the animals in the park without incident, yet
these animals continued to be a valued part of the park visitor’s engagement with nature.
Water meanwhile seemed to symbolise the connection between children and their
perceived purity and spirituality as well as their picturesque qualities. Water when provided
by drinking fountains was a visible symbol of the redemptive qualities of the natural child
posing them and the park as an alternative to alcohol and the public house. The multiple
images of children and water features further suggest that while this was a further link
between nature and the child, the more formal areas of water could be made more natural
and more picturesque by the creation of candid images of children in these areas.

The link between the natural child and nostalgia for the rural, pastoral past has been
repeatedly made within this chapter. Children seemed to suggest the embodiment of
human past, both in an evolutionary sense and as a symbol of the picturesque and the
innocence. It is this combination which perhaps separated the Romantic conception of the
natural child, which was innocent and spiritual, with the late-Victorian and Edwardian child
who also represented the more brutal aspects of nature. It is this savage side of the natural
child which the late-Victorians and Edwardians sought to indulge through providing access
to wildernesses and wild animals, but also to cultivate, by way of the educational messages
of the park: the labelling of trees, the mission of the Dicky Bird Society and most significantly
through the provision of water as a metaphorical path to purity and godliness. While the
backward past seems to be represented in the very notion of the natural child, children also
act as a symbol of progress and hope for the future, both through their redemptive
qualities, but also through the link between the child and the potential of the evolutionary
process. While work on children’s fiction in particular has identified the unique way that
children were thought to be natural at this time, this chapter explores how this was made materially manifest in the park. Park landscapes aimed to facilitate natural behaviour, and to shape children’s actions in accordance with these ideals. Children’s actions in the park were further interpreted through this prism of the natural child and so contributed to the production and reproduction of this particular identity.
This chapter explores play in the park; the way the park designers engaged with time-specific notions of appropriate play; the acts of play children performed; and the attempts to survey, regulate and control these acts in accordance with ideas of respectability and propriety. The idea of childhood as a cultural construct was explored in the previous chapter through the prism of the ‘natural child’. By focusing on play, this chapter aims to move the discussion on to address what cultural theorist Dan Fleming calls the ‘whole structure of power and illusions’ which surrounded childhood.\(^1\) His work *Powerplay*, which uses ‘affect theory’ to explore bodily responses to twentieth-century play objects, argues that the material conditions of childhood reflect the values which adults are trying to create. The cultural creation of a naturally innocent child, as discussed in the previous chapter, becomes the ‘focal point for moralising about what “good” children...should be allowed to do, to experience, and to be’\(^2\). Those designing public parks sought to materially facilitate ‘good’ play in their designs, engaging with contemporary ideas of play as a biological necessity, while also balancing the need to maintain the park as a space for all ages, genders and social backgrounds. Section 4.2 looks at the design of case study parks, along with a number of writings by social commentators, park designers and educationalists from the time, in order to unpick and understand the ways in which play was made materially possible.

Symptomatic of the creation of an innocent child was an ‘endless dynamic...between childhood innocence and the corruptions of the world’\(^3\). In order for the park to facilitate ‘good play’, structures also had to be in place to morally police the space. Hierarchies of surveillance, supervision and regulation were created in order to keep children safe from negative influences, even when those negative influences were the children themselves. Guided into ‘good’ play by the materiality afforded them in the space, and heavily policed by those hierarchies of power, children navigated playing in the park. The lasting material traces of play in Whitworth Park, uncovered as part of the Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project will be used, along with images and contemporary fiction and non-fiction writing, to explore the experience of play in section 4.3. Surveillance,

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\(^2\) Fleming, p. 2.
\(^3\) Fleming, p. 3.
supervision and regulation are explored in section 4.4, utilising the meeting minutes of the Parks and Cemeteries sub-committees relevant to this thesis, as well as newspaper reports and oral history accounts. A brief historiography of play as a theoretical concept will form section 4.2, along with an introduction to contemporary ideas of play.

4.1 Understanding Play

Shuttleworth highlights how ‘the Victorians did not simply create new social spaces for the child to inhabit, they also granted the child a new interiority’.\(^4\) The mind of the child, their behaviours and actions were studied in-depth by scientists, doctors, and psychologists, intensifying with the emergence of the Child Study Movement in the 1890s.\(^5\) As children were increasingly observed and studied, play took on a greater significance as a point of access into the workings of the child’s mind. Anthropologist Helen Schwartzman has noted how ‘evolutionary theories of biological and cultural development were in vogue during this era’, and this strongly influenced childhood studies.\(^6\) A number of theories concerning the meaning of play emerged in the late-Victorian and Edwardian era that are now referred to by sociologists as the classical theories of play.\(^7\) These classical theorists characterised play as ephemeral, the stuff of childhood, and sought to understand what play was. Eleni Mellou identifies four distinct theories which emerged during this time: ‘Surplus energy theory, Recreation or Relaxation theory, Practice or Pre-exercise theory, and Recapitulation theory’.\(^8\) Influential British philosopher Herbert Spencer viewed play as a ‘superfluous activity’.\(^9\) He situated his argument within a consideration of evolutionary progress, arguing that young animals of more developed species used less energy for survival and therefore

\(^4\) Shuttleworth, p. 359.
\(^5\) The journal *The Paidologist* was set up by the British Child Study Association in 1899, in the midst of this fervour of child study. In 1908 they merged with the Childhood Study Society into The Child Study Society and the journal was renamed *Child Study*. See Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 129.
\(^7\) Eleni Mellou, ‘Play Theories: A Contemporary Review’, *Early Child Development and Care*, 102 (1) (1994), 91-100 (pp. 91-93).
\(^8\) Mellou, p. 91.
\(^9\) Mellou, p. 92.
had more energy for play. In doing so he drew on German philosopher Friedrich Schiller’s theory of play as ‘the aimless expenditure of exuberant energy’ not required for work and survival, therefore something which ended once the child reached workable age. G. Stanley Hall took the link between the evolutionary child and play further, claiming, in his theory of recapitulation, that children re-enacted a pre-civilised, animal past through their play and in doing so aided their development. Like Hall, philosopher Karl Groos also noted value in play as a chance for children to develop the ‘physical and mental capacities’ which they would require as adults. He too looked to young animals to develop his theories, noting how play was the ‘instinctive practice, without serious intent, of activities which will later be essential to life’. Children’s imitation of adult activities through play was crucial to his theory.

Scientists, philosophers, and psychologists were not the only people interested in the playful actions of children at this time. A fascination with childhood also occupied artists, novelists and playwrights, and child characters in adult fiction works by Henry James, Thomas Hardy and J. M. Barrie were the source of enthralment, obsession, and sometimes horror by adult characters and their authors. Awareness of the significance of children’s play permeated society, and for those in the park watching and attempting to structure, understand and regulate children’s play took on a greater meaning. Successful ‘good’ play could hint at the potential for a civilised healthy future for the nation, while the reverse brought to mind fears over degeneration and decline. Many late-Victorian games devised for children by adults emphasised domesticity and good manners. This is immediately clear on scanning the contents page to Lois Bates’ 1897 games manual *Games Without Music for Children*. The suggested games ‘Laying the Breakfast-Table’, ‘Shopping’, ‘Politeness in Streets’ and ‘Dressing Children’, played under supervision in the schoolroom, were explicit in their attempts to use play as a means to educate and correct children and so shape their

11 Mellou, p. 91.
14 Saracho and Spodek, ‘Understanding Play and Its Theories’, p. 5.
15 See for example, Henry James, The Turn of the Screw (London: William Heinemann, 1898), Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (London: Osgood, McIlvaine, & Co, 1895), J.M. Barrie, Little White Bird (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1902)
behaviours. Indeed in her preface Bates comments on how she intended for these particular
games to ‘help teach the children important truths that are difficult for them to learn in the
abstract, but which represented and practised in childish play may make an impression on
their plastic little minds’. 16 This book, like many of its kind, was created primarily for the
school room and can be seen to continue a tradition started earlier in the century of
redefining play away from its frivolous associations. 17 Play was a serious business for the
late-Victorians and Edwardians and this tied into the wider development of middle-class
leisure, discussed in Chapter 1, as a chance for re-creation, moral, healthy and spiritual.

Likewise toys marketed at both girls and boys often had educational connotations,
such as the nursery game Loto, a form of Bingo, which had variants known as ‘Botanical
Loto, Spelling Loto, Geographical Loto and Historical Loto’. 18 Similarly, the board game
‘Wallis’ picturesque round game of the produce and manufactures of the countries of
England and Wales’ educated children in the geography of the country and also highlighted
the civic and industrial achievements of the age. 19 Dolls could teach about ‘social rank,
tasteful dress and the occupations of various classes’ as well as gender roles. 20 For girls this
perhaps included the care and nurture of infants, and deportment and manners, while for
boys dolls dressed in uniform from a wide-ranging set of occupations emphasised traits and
qualities of masculinity. It is important not to overstate the gender division of toys, as
literary critic Ira Bruce Nadel points out using the example of Edmund Gosse to demonstrate
that there is always an exception, albeit in this case a very unusual one. Gosse’s
autobiography Father and Son (1907) makes reference to his dolls, two out of the three
being female. 21 Karin Calvert also draws attention to athletic girls and boys playing with
dolls in her work Children in the House. 22

The significance of children’s outside, self-guided play was as critical as the
educational play they received in the home and in school. Furthermore, it was likely to be

17 Ira Bruce Nadel, “’The Mansion of Bliss,’’ or the Place of Play in Victorian Life and Literature’, Children’s
Literature, 10 (1982), 18-36 (p. 19).
18 Robert Charles Bell, Board and Table Games From Many Civilizations, Vol. 1 (New York: Courier Corporation,
19 Nadel, p. 30.
20 Nadel, p. 30.
22 Karin Calvert, Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood in America, 1600-1900 (Boston:
the sort of play children would themselves choose: Bates seems certain that it is the playground games which are the most likely to be replicated outside of the school’s boundaries, rather than the moralistic rhymes of the school room. Nonetheless, adults seemed determined to ensure that domestic lessons would not be forgotten even when children played outdoors. Literary critic of children’s fiction, Marah Gubar, highlights how children in fiction are inclined to replicate their domestic routines when in strange landscapes, like the Darling children in Never Land, or else recite their school room lessons as Alice does in Wonderland. The differing attitudes towards play at home and play outside is symptomatic of a dualistic rendering of childhood in this period, whereby children were recognised as little savages, wild creatures who needed contact with the outside to be truly themselves and to prevent an unhealthy and unnatural early maturation, while at the same time acting as the embodiment of hope for a civilised future. The classical theorists saw in children’s play the re-enactment of our animal past, but also the evolutionary shift towards civilisation and emotional, intellectual and physical maturity. This perhaps suggests a complex expectation of children who are understood to be different, unique, uncivilised and uncorrupted by civilisation, and are yet defined by their ability to assimilate to the civilising and domesticating influences of home and school. The public park was possibly the most obvious site for this complex performance of dualistic childhood to take place. Within the boundary fence, children were expected to play independently from adults, to act out their savage proclivities and yet alongside this it was hoped that they might also show decorum, restraint and an awareness of polite behaviour.

More recent attempts to theorise and study play within academia seem to have reduced play activities to a set of actions necessary for cognitive development or socialisation within society. In her 1978 book Transformations, Schwartzman argues that by classifying and defining acts of play we reduce them to mere cognitive functions and by doing so lose their uniqueness as part of a phenomenon. She previously challenged the idea that studies of play must also contribute to knowledge about ‘other more “serious,” and presumably more important, activities’. She goes on to argue that ‘research on

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23 Bates, p. vi.
24 Gubar, p. 6.
25 Shuttleworth, p. 268.
26 Schwartzman, Transformations, p. 7.
children’s play can and should be evaluated on the basis of what is learned about children’s play (not cognition, or social structure, or culture contact). By coupling play to these other areas of study is to lose sight of what is special and unique about play itself. In her investigation of Indian hobbyism, anthropologist Petra Tjitske Kalshoven goes further, arguing that acts of play challenge the established binary oppositions of ‘reality versus play, imitation and creativity, the fake and the authentic, the imaginary and the material, being and appearing.’ Kalshoven situates her investigations within the specific cultural and material contexts of play. Play is not simply reflective of external society, but is a complex series of competing thoughts, experiences and events which reveal much about the way in which play is a material experience through which ‘real’ life can be negotiated, assimilated or rejected and performed. In other words play is more real, both in the sense of authenticity and as a semi-imagined state of being, than real life, and can be viewed as an important means by which identity is constructed.

This is important to consider when investigating children’s play in the park. Acts of play must not be seen as merely amusing diversions, but rather as acts resonant with social, political and cultural meaning. Utilising an interpretive reproduction approach to play, we can note how children belong to at least two specific cultures, that of their peers and that of adults. Their negotiation of these often competing influences, as well as their expression of their own identities is articulated through acts of play. Play forms a significant aspect of the experience of the park landscape. It reveals how children at the time actively took part in negotiating ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviour, in conjunction with the adult cultures transcribed onto the landscape of the park, and present in the figures of authority within, and their own peer culture, which was potentially more diverse in the park than at anywhere else in their material worlds.

30 Schwartzman, Transformations, p. 5.
4.2 Design

Parks were carefully designed to ensure a particular look and to encourage certain behaviours from those who visited them. Children were often a focus of the design process, both at an ideological level through discussions of the particular benefits of parks for children and how these should be optimised, and in a more practical way in the landscaping of parks to facilitate the regulation, control and supervision of children. The design was expressed materially through the layout of the park, but can also be identified in the many articles and newspaper reports written at the time discussing park spaces across the country and beyond. Furthermore, children’s literature, imagery, park-byelaws and adult guidance all influenced children in the correct use of the park landscape, reinforcing the design ideals of the time. This section aims to explore park design, and the ideology behind it, in relation to children’s play, using literature of the time, maps and images of the case-study parks, bye-laws and children’s literature. It investigates what the park design reveals about ideas of play, and how play was enabled, regulated and controlled materially. To begin it is necessary to look at how those writing about parks envisaged play within the space and how this related to the wider notions of what benefits the park was supposed to bring to the general population. This initial discussion will focus on notions of health, the expenditure of energy and organisation and will highlight the differences between the park and the playground. Secondly, the way in which these ideals were made materially manifest will be investigated through the case studies, with special reference to Whitworth Park and Roundwood Park. These parks are emphasised due to their relatively small size and rich photographic archives, as well as the evidence obtained through the excavation work done as part of the Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project. Spatial delineation, railings and barriers, visibility and surveillance will be discussed and how these physical cues enabled, regulate and control play.

Of primary importance to those campaigning for, commenting on and designing parks, was the health of the urban population, and especially of children. The mid-century Victorians had often restricted the playing of games in parks and had overseen the closure of a number of ‘pleasure grounds’ which had offered opportunities for dancing amongst
other activities.\textsuperscript{31} Although as Wyborn argues, increasingly these pleasure grounds had become associated with alcohol rather than ‘respectable’ leisure.\textsuperscript{32} However, for the late-Victorians and Edwardians, some play offered a positive impact upon the physical, mental, and moral health of children. Play and exercise could of course be done at home or indoors for some, however it was the space and fresh air afforded them in the parks which was thought to improve health. Additionally, healthy play itself was seen to be a ‘duty to ourselves, to our city, and our Empire’.\textsuperscript{33} This was not to be achieved at the expense of aesthetics however, as T H Mawson, a well-known landscape architect, declared ‘you cannot...improve the physique in the national or civic sense if you occupy people with physical development as an end in itself. You must divert them by pleasant surroundings’.\textsuperscript{34} To this end many of those writing about children’s play in the parks stressed the ideological and spatial difference between play spaces and other areas of the park.

In his 1886 essay, ‘The Children of the City: what can be done for them?’, James Burn Russell, Glasgow’s first full-time Medical Officer of Health, declared play to be ‘essential for the health and duly proportioned growth of the child’.\textsuperscript{35} Playing competitive and athletic games were considered especially useful in developing the health and wellbeing of the child and the games of ‘cricket, football, swimming and boating’ in particular were deemed ‘salutary and excellent’ by physician John Milner Fothergill.\textsuperscript{36} Physical health was often linked closely to moral and mental health. As Russell argues ‘pent up in common stairs and in back courts, without a bit of space which they can call their own, their play inevitably becomes in great part mischief’.\textsuperscript{37} He laments ‘what can a poor boy do but pull bricks out of the walls of the ash-pit to build houses with or climb upon its roof and tear slates off to make traps for the city sparrows? If they fly kites the policeman cuts the string: if they dig holes in the court to play marbles, the factor denounces them to the police’.\textsuperscript{38} While he implies that they are less given to mischief, Russell states that ‘the girls are no better off. As

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Taylor, p. 215.
\item Taylor, p. 215.
\item J. Milner Fothergill, ‘Health in Childhood’, \textit{New Dominion Monthly} (Nov., 1875), 442-6 (p. 442).
\item Russell, p. 98.
\item Russell, p. 98. A Factor in Scotland is an agent of the property owner, who acts as a property manager.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
you feel your way along the dark lobbies...you stumble over them playing at houses. As you
ascend the stairs you have to pick your way through the assortment of broken dishes and
odds and ends with which they are reproducing their meagre experiences of house-keeping
and shopping’. 39 His treatise argued for the provision of open air spaces for children’s play,
public parks being one important element of this. While complimentary of many well-known
parks in the UK, he declared that ‘parks should not be places for merely dawdling along
looking at flowers or admiring grass through iron railings’, rather there should be areas left
vacant for cricket and football. 40

Russell predominantly describes children playing with toys and domestic related
material culture in the streets. When he imagines play in the park it is cricket and football
rather than marbles, kites or crockery he sees. The call for play and games spaces to be
included in public park design seems to have been regularly repeated throughout the
century, reflecting a widely-held opinion of the benefits of doing so. The Manchester Times
and Gazette argued in 1844 that ‘the young require something more exciting – we had
almost said more boisterous – than mere walking about. Quoits, cricket, golf, skittles, and a
variety of other games adapted to every degree of strength and proficiency, with a well-
ordered gymnasium, ought especially to be provided, since vigorous, buoyant health
requires it’. 41 In 1872 The Sporting Chronicle agreed, stating that ‘a public park which is
merely ornamental only serves as a basking place for dirty little Arabs and lazy outcasts’. 42
The author suggested that ‘athletic exercises should be provided in as great variety as
possible’, and that alongside ‘the usual facilities for cricket, gymnastics and boating...
running tracks measured off for all the usual distances up to a mile should be provided’. 43 In
1903 a lecture given by prominent surgeon Charles Atkin in Sheffield repeated the call for
gymnasia and other sporting facilities in public parks arguing that the playing of games such
as cricket and football ‘promoted healthy tone, energy in the performance of every duty,
skill, agility, smartness, steadiness, nerve, and manliness...inculcated healthy rivalry and
ambition to excel, increased judgement and self-reliance, promoted endurance and

40 Russell, p. 105.
courage, afforded an outlet for high spirits, taught moderation, discipline, perseverance and honour’.

Figure 4.1: Johns (photographer), *Tug of War game in Queens Park, NW London* (unknown). Postcard. Brent Council Image and Photograph Collection.

Not everyone thought parks were the ideal places to situate these games facilities however, and in 1912, *Art and Progress* journal ran a brief piece stating that ‘the playground is not a park; it should not be a park nor part of a park. It represents something entirely different in the life of the city, and it should be physically quite different’. Furthermore it argued that ‘park features are not desirable in a playground, and if part of an area hitherto known as a park must be taken for a playground let the line drawn between them be sharp and the barrier impassable’. For the author, parks and playgrounds were distinct places, offering different opportunities for play. The playground offered a communal space for organised play, however he argued that parks should not be restricted to children, which would in effect make it an ‘outdoor gymnasium’ but rather should allow for a gathering of

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45 ‘Playground Design’ *Art and Progress*, 3 (6) (1912), 567, p. 567.
‘people of all ages’.46 This distinction between the designated areas of play, for adults as well as children, from the wider park space is interesting as it seems to delineate the types of play children could take part in. The article does not expand on this idea unfortunately but we can perhaps surmise that the author felt that organised games, like cricket, races or tug of war, as shown in figure 4.1, had their place in the playground, whereas more individualistic games, such as sailing model yachts, could be enjoyed in the park, as in figures 4.2 and 4.3 which show boys engaged in solitary play at the lake side in Whitworth Park and Greenhead Park. This article demonstrates the significance of the types of play which should be enjoyed in the park, and how this was subject to much discussion and attempts at regulation. The article’s author seems to suggest that the park is not just a children’s space, like the nursery or school ground, but rather a space which children could use in negotiation with adults also in the space.

The Art and Progress article suggested separating play spaces and parks completely, making playgrounds more formal than the ‘naturalesque’ parks.47 By contrast, in his 1894 essay for New Review, Lord Meath, founder of Empire Day, suggested enclosing the grass near the entrances with railings while leaving larger areas of grass open for games. He argued that ‘by this means the untidy parts would be concealed from the eyes of the pedestrian who followed the ordinary parts’.48 For Meath the untidy parts are linked with play and are situated away from the front gates, implying that the formal areas around the gates were not designed to be played in. Lord Meath was a leading figure and supporter of both the Youth Movement and the Public Parks Movement. It seems unlikely that he viewed the untidiness of play and play areas as a negative aspect; rather that he felt that formality and beauty were not necessarily important attributes in a play space. This contrasts with the idea of nature and beauty as being morally uplifting and healthy, as discussed in the previous chapter. The design of the case study parks, particularly Roundwood Park, seems to have included physical barriers as a means by which to distinguish formal and informal areas.

Figure 4.2: (Not Attributed), The Lake at Whitworth Park (unknown). Postcard. Rusholme Archive.

Figure 4.3: Smith Carter (photographer), Lakes in Greenhead Park (1910). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive.
4.2.1 Park Design – Roundwood Park

Despite being only around 26 acres, Roundwood Park still sought to explicitly provide facilities for children’s play in its design. The park was ‘tastefully laid out’, containing a single gymnasium to be shared by boys and girls (see figure 4.4).\(^{49}\) Gender segregation remained significant, demonstrated materially in the park through the restricted access to these play spaces for adults and in the segregation of lavatory facilities. However it is possible to view the provision of a mixed-sex gymnasium as a changing attitude towards the physical education of girls in the latter part of the century.\(^{50}\) Michelle Smith and Gillian Avery have charted the development of female heroines in children’s fiction and demonstrated how the late-Victorian and Edwardian period witnessed a redefinition of young femininity, particularly apparent in the school stories of L. T. Meade and Angela Brazil.\(^{51}\) In the book *The School by the Sea* (1914), Brazil describes her female characters as ‘rosy, racy, healthy, hearty, well-grown...overflowing with vigorous young life and abounding spirits, mentally and physically fit, and about as different from their medieval forerunners as a hockey stick from a spindle’.\(^{52}\)

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\(^{49}\) ‘Roundwood Public Park’, *Reynold’s Newspaper*, 12 May 1895, p. 1.


\(^{52}\) Angela Brazil, *The School by the Sea* (London: Blackie and Sons, 1936), pp. 10-11.
The hockey stick may have represented an excellent metaphor for the late-Victorian and Edwardian schoolgirl, but sporting facilities for girls, other than gymnasiums, remained largely absent from the parks. While Brazil’s girls played cricket as well as hockey, the countless reports of cricket matches played in Roundwood Park are without exception played by boys or men. It is important to observe that it was only the very wealthy who could afford at this time to send their girls to boarding school. While state education encouraged physical education for girls as well as boys, a lack of space, as well as a slower
uptake in progressive ideas at the time, meant that girls continued to have limited access to games like cricket and hockey until after the First World War. Park design reflects this and while gymnasia offered girls the opportunity to take part in athletic play, it was mostly boys and men who benefitted from the sporting facilities where they were provided.

Figure 4.5: OS Map, Queens Park, NW London (1910). Detail from 1910 OS Map. Digimap. Coloured to show the gymnasium (red) and the main entrances (blue).
Figure 4.6: OS Map, Alexandra Park, Manchester (1870). Detail from 1870 OS Map. Digimap. Coloured to show the gymnasium (red) and the main entrance (blue).

It is clear from the maps in figures 4.5 and 4.6 that the gymnasia were often situated away from the main areas of the park. While adult play activities, specifically in the form of cricket, tennis, football, boating and bathing, were catered for in various other parks, gymnasia like the one in Roundwood Park, were by the later part of the century reserved almost exclusively for children, a shift reflected in the inclusion of swings and see-saws (see figure 4.7 and 4.8). By using this space for a gymnasium, rather than for a bowling green, tennis court or playing field, as was the case in both Saltwell Park and Greenhead Park, the
designers of Roundwood Park were making a statement about the importance of child’s play in their park. Adult’s play, while significant in theory, was here materially relegated below the importance of children’s play. However, as noted, these gymnasia were themselves located away from the main entryways and features of the park, and were rarely included in the photographic record (The images below are notable exceptions), and certainly not in the postcards of the time.

**Figure 4.7:** Arthur Dunn (photographer), *King Albert Belgian School Visiting Gymnasium at Queens Park, NW London* (1916-1917). Photograph. Brent Council Image and Photograph Collection.
Lord Meath’s suggestion that the more attractive, formal areas near the park entrances be protected by railings is incorporated into the design of Roundwood Park. Low fences, hedges and other borders were employed throughout the parks in order to delineate areas which could be walked on from those where walking was forbidden. Images of Roundwood Park show these barriers clearly. Figure 4.9 is a photograph taken in or around 1910, from a position near the drinking fountain, situated close to the main entrance of the park. The paths are separated from the turf on both sides by low fences and hedging on the left hand side of the image. In the very centre of the image two boys stand facing the camera near to the low hedge while a park warden, also facing the camera, stands at some distance behind them. Two women walk away from the camera, pushing a pram. The two children are both literally and figuratively the centre of the image here. Stood quietly on the path, they are without immediate supervision, yet the barriers around them and the background figure of the warden prevent them from transgressing acceptable
behaviours in this moment. The children are noticeably not playing and the emphasis of the photograph is on the other positive aspects of the park; good behaviour, morality and crucially for this picture, health. An empty wheelchair occupies the space near a bench on the far left of the image, suggesting that its owner has been liberated from occupying the chair while in the park, perhaps to sit on the bench, or to stand, further underpinning the suggestion of the health-giving park. Given the emphasis on play for health, this image is striking in being devoid of any play activity. This contrasts with figure 4.10 which was taken in approximately 1900. Here a group of women and children of different ages stand around the path and on the grass in one of the areas away from the main entrance. Once again children are positioned centrally, facing the camera, and are stationary, although the children in the background are holding a hoop toy. The children, and indeed the adults are allowed on the grass, and the worn path edges show that this was regularly done. The freedom of movement offered here to children, and the absence of either park warden or of physical barriers reflects the attitudes discussed above. Away from the formal entrances of the park, children were offered an opportunity to move through the space in a less formal, controlled manner. Play and the material culture of play was encouraged in the park, yet it was away from the main entrances of the park where this was primarily to take place.

Figure 4.9: (Not Attributed), Roundwood Park Formal Paths (circa 1900). Postcard. Brent Council Image and Photograph Collection.
4.2.2 Park Design – Whitworth Park

Whitworth Park was described in 1915 as being ‘entirely a garden’ differing from other parks and gardens in Manchester in ‘not possessing either a bowling green or a tennis court, and, further, no gymnasium for children exists’. However a gravel playground, open since 1891, occupied the Denmark Road corner of what today has become part of the park. Furthermore, Moss Side Recreation Ground, a five acre site, was close by on Great Western Street, providing bowling greens, lawn space and walks. In 1934, a ‘Short Survey of Manchester Parks’ concluded that while Whitworth Park was ‘the only one […] where no adult games are allowed’ it was ‘well and freely patronised by the children’. Newspaper accounts and images also testify to the park being extremely popular, particularly with children, despite having no specific play areas. The lack of gymnasium or sports facilities was deliberate. The small size of Whitworth Park and the existence of sporting facilities nearby certainly affected the decision not to include similar in the park. It is also clear that the park

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set out to appeal to ‘the many thousands of citizens of all ages, who affect the quiet and sylvan rather than the noisy and athletic style of recreation’.

Whitworth Park perhaps expressed the more individualistic play described by *Art and Progress*, rather than the collective, organised play of the playground. A lack of flat open playing fields and the dense planting of trees and flowers on areas which could have been used as such, discouraged children wishing to play games such as cricket or football. By creating a grassy mound, covered in trees, however, the designers perhaps sought to restrict the playing of ‘rowdy games’, also forbidden by the park bye-laws (see Figure 4.22), and create a play space suitable for games such as hide and seek, imaginative role-play games, and solitary games which involved less movement (see figure 4.11).

![Figure 4.11](image-url)

**Figure 4.11:** (Not Attributed), *Whitworth Park and Bandstand* (1906). Postcard. Rusholme Archives.

The design of the park facilitated close regulation of children’s play. For the newspaper commentators who visited Whitworth Park on opening, the number and frequency of benches was deemed worthy of mention; ‘The governors have provided an abundance of seats, and they are placed at short intervals along the sides of the walks,

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Benches throughout the park provided visitors with the opportunity to sit and observe the behaviour on display in the park. The lakeside in particular had benches placed facing towards the lake, and the glass pavilion offered visitors the chance to sit under cover while watching the activities surrounding the lake. Given the associated dangers of playing by the waterside, acknowledged by the designers in the placing of railings surrounding the space, it is likely that the provision of these benches in such a strategic viewing place, could have reflected not only the idea that the lake was a particular beauty spot, but also facilitated the surveillance of children. The design of the park, with specific surveillance points, as well as a restriction on open spaces, was designed to facilitate the controlled and appropriate manner of play in this space, which here in Whitworth Park was less ‘rowdy’ and more ‘quiet’.

In conclusion, the design of both Roundwood Park and Whitworth Park was a material manifestation of a number of ideological understandings of children’s play, underpinning discussions at the time. The link between health and play, particularly athletic play was clear and this was catered for in the provision of sports fields and gymnasia. However, it was also understood that play, particularly rowdy, noisy and athletic versions, needed to be limited to designated spaces, away from the more sedate and formal areas of the park. This had to be controlled, supervised and regulated, acts which were facilitated through park design. An alternative expression of play in the park also found favour, particularly where athletic pursuits were catered for elsewhere. This was a quieter, individual model of play, materially defined by the use of planting, railings and landscaping and closely overseen by strategically placed adults. Both parks had at their heart an understanding of the health benefits of well-regulated specific places for play. The provision of space, fresh air and activity not only prevented mischief in those who took part, be them adults or children, but was also seen as a moral and civic duty. That both Roundwood Park and Whitworth Park chose to focus on the provision of children’s play placed children at the centre of this attempt to positively impact the future physique of the nation through play. Furthermore, while the park bye-laws rarely outlawed particular aspects of play material culture, the design and layout of the park ensured that certain forms of play were

encouraged while others were made impossible. This negotiation of play and landscape will be discussed further in the following section.

4.3 Acts of Play

Having discussed the ways in which specific notions of play were incorporated into park design, this section will now investigate what play actually took place in the park, utilising a wide-range of diverse sources. In doing so I will discuss to what extent these acts adhered to idealised concepts of play as expressed in literature and park design and how far acts of play demonstrated competing notions of acceptable and appropriate play. In order to do so it will be necessary to focus on specific areas of each individual park. Boating lakes and the lakeside area will be investigated first, followed by paths, formal areas and hard standing, playing fields and green turf areas, and finally playgrounds and gymnasiums. Before beginning this investigation a brief discussion of the archaeology of Whitworth Park will explain and situate the finds used to discuss play.
During the excavation seasons of 2011 and 2013, three main trenches were opened in Whitworth Park (trenches 1, 3 and 4 as shown in figure 4.12). Details of the excavation process and findings can be found in the project Data Structure Report.\(^{58}\) However, it is worth highlighting a number of key artefacts uncovered as part of these excavations which will be discussed below. Artefacts from the lake bed (contexts 1083 and 1084, as well as sample 014 which was wet sieved), comprise mostly of glass bottles, bits of wood and leather which are extremely well preserved, and items associated with children’s play. Marbles, knucklebones, a toy soldier, a whistle, a dolls eye, dolls hair brush and parts of two separate dolls tea sets, as well as parts of shoes and socks, presumably lost while paddling.

\(^{58}\) Cobb, et al., *Archaeological Survey and Excavation Report*. 

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**Figure 4.12:** OS Map, *Whitworth Park, Manchester* (1950s). Detail from 1950s OS Map. Digimap. Showing positions of trenches for excavation. Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project.
Other artefacts may have also been associated with play, such as two wooden cotton bobbins, a starting pistol (or a ratter) a wooden and metal scroll, a metal lock perhaps from a diary, and various bits of wood, some which had been shaped, which could have potentially formed parts of boats, home-made or shop-bought.\(^{59}\) The high number of artefacts relating to children’s play activities supports the idea that this area was very popular with children. Marbles found from the area surrounding the bandstand as well as the mound were of varying types, clay, shop-bought glass coloured marbles, and Codd bottle marbles, all discussed below. Also excavated from the mound was a clay pipe fragment showing patterns of wear not associated with smoking, and a fragment of a china doll.\(^{60}\) These will all be discussed in detail below.


**Figure 4.13**: (Not Attributed), *The Children’s Corner, Whitworth Park* (circa 1900). Photograph. Manchester City Council Local Image Collection.

### 4.3.1 Lakeside Play

Figure 4.13, a photograph from 1900 named ‘The Children’s Corner, Whitworth Park’ shows children playing at the lake edge in front of the pavilion (including the precise area which was uncovered as part of the excavations in 2011 and 2013, see also figure 4.1). The image, taken by a local photographer, illustrates how popular the lake in Whitworth Park was as a destination within the park landscape. In contrast to the often heavily staged postcard images of the time, it captures a more spontaneous moment of play. In this image the children are spread along the shore of the lake, separated from the adult visitors of the park by the low metal railings. The children are engaged in a range of activities requiring some to crouch at the water’s edge, while others sit back on the railings. Initially designed as a
boating lake, complete with boathouse and ornamental islands, its popularity with children was deemed significant enough to alter the design of it in the early 1920s, turning it into a paddling pool and model yachting lake. The image above does not show children sailing model boats but the excavation of the lake shore bed included the soles of shoes and at least one sock suggesting paddling was popular. However, excavation of the lake edge in Whitworth Park uncovered artefacts which suggest that play at the edge of the lake did not necessarily require interaction with the water. Parts of doll and soldier sets, a whistle, marbles and knucklebones were all recovered from the organic deposit which formed the lake bed. While some play activities at the lakeside used the water as part of the play, for example sailing boats, clearly not all play in this area was characterised in this way. The lakeside area offered a unique space within the park for play and with it offered possibilities for a range of play activities which far exceeded those anticipated by the park designers.

![Image of children playing at the lakeside](image)

**Figure 4.14**: (Not Attributed), *Children playing at the lakeside, Whitworth Park* (unknown). Photograph. Rusholme Archive.
The edges of the lakes were usually made of concrete or other hard surface, sloping down away from the land and towards the water. The lake edge was delineated from the area set further back, either by obvious structures like the metal railings at Whitworth and Saltwell Parks, or by suggestion, like the cobbles at Greenhead Park (a technique also applied at Whitworth Park).\textsuperscript{61} Despite these boundaries, images such as figures 4.14 and 4.15 show that for children, the lakeside area was still considered an accessible area for play. These areas may have been considered as congregation points for children, and certainly the adults who accompanied children into Whitworth Park may well have brought them to the lakeside area in order to make use of the countless benches facing the lake and of the pavilion which provided views of the lake, seating and shelter, while enabling them to observe their wards from a small distance. Likewise in Greenhead Park, benches were provided around all of the lakes and ponds, while the grottos provided seating and shelter. The lakeside at Saltwell Park seems to have been lacking in the provision of benches, however the lake itself, situated at the bottom of the hill, was visible from almost all of the park north of the Dene. In congregating at the lakeside, children were brought into contact

\textsuperscript{61} Cobb et al., pp. 61-62.
with other children, and the toys or play objects they brought with them. Furthermore the fact that these lakeside areas were separate to the rest of the park, symbolically excluding adults, may have increased their appeal as a space for children to gather.

Observation of other acts of play was also a significant part of play at the lake edge for young children especially. In 1903, a *Manchester Guardian* article entitled ‘The Children’s Park’ describes how a young boy, in charge of two younger sisters, positions them at the lake edge to watch him play with his model boat, the youngest in her perambulator and the elder on one of the ‘mimic seaside rocks’ around the shore.62 Young Tommy then sets about playing with his boat on the water. The photograph of the boys above as well as the story about Tommy and his sisters echoes an illustration done by Arthur Rackham for the 1906 publication of J M Barrie’s *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (see figure 4.16). In this image, girls are clustered around the lake edge, some crouching by the water and others stood back watching. In the foreground of this image, a group of girls stand with their backs to the water each holding toy objects. Two of the girls hold hoops whilst one has a doll. These girls are seen to be interacting with each other, perhaps involved in a discussion regarding their toys. While they stand close to the lake edge, these girls are not interacting with the water but rather are engaging in collaborative or competitive play with other children and their playthings, not specifically designed for use on or by water.

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Two miniature ceramic saucers were found in the organic deposit at the bottom of the lake (see figure 4.17). These saucers were typical parts of the doll’s tea sets which were available to buy in this period. While some of these sets were very ornate, plainer versions were readily available such as those found in Whitworth Park (a child’s hairbrush was also found in the lake deposit and a doll’s eye - see figure 4.17). These items would have usually been played with along with a doll, although of course the popularity of second-hand trading of toys may have meant that sets did not match and may well have been smaller than those available to buy. It is unlikely that an entire set would have been transported into the park for play. Games involving these toys will be discussed later, but it is useful to note how the lakeside area may have been used as a site for the display of prized toy items. These single parts of large sets could have been used to show off or to communicate aspects of childhood identity and ownership. Having a single item of a doll’s tea set to show in the park to other children may have communicated status and been representative of the ownership of a larger selection of toys at home. In this way children assimilated notions of conspicuous consumption engaged in by adults and creatively replicated this in the park setting. The lakeside area therefore becomes a place for children to play and interact with...
other children. This did not always appear to be harmonious and while images and newspaper reports on the whole have tended not to report on moments of competition or antagonism, there was a call for railings to be placed around the lake in Whitworth Park in order to prevent children from pushing one another in.\footnote{T. Burdett, ‘Correspondence’, Manchester Courier 30 April 1892, p. 11.} It is equally possible that not all of the toys which found their way to the bottom of the lake in Whitworth Park were lost accidentally.

![Figure 4.17: Objects excavated from Trench 1, Whitworth Park (2013) Author’s Own.](image)

**Figure 4.17:** Objects excavated from Trench 1, Whitworth Park (2013) Author’s Own.

### 4.3.2 Boats, floats and paddling

Of course the lakeside area was not just popular as a congregation point for children, the water itself proved a huge draw. Boy’s Own Paper reported in 1884 that ‘the popularity of model yachting grows apace...and everywhere there are signs that in the next decade the
'sailing of boatikins' will take a prominent place in our national pastimes'. Images and postcards from Whitworth Park, and Greenhead Park all show model boats afloat on the water, and parks nationwide hosted clubs dedicated to 'the promotion of this very fascinating and scientific amusement'. Saltwell Park hosted one such club and as is evident from the above way in which it was described, that the sailing of model yachts was considered a serious sport. The Gateshead Model Yacht Club, which held its meetings at Saltwell Park, and indeed hosted races between its members and the members of other clubs such as the Sunderland Model Yacht Club, was for the most part made up of adult men. These men lobbied successfully for a ‘model yacht house’ in 1888 to house their boats, despite widespread condemnation of the Parks Committee agreeing to pay for this building and less successfully campaigned for the entire lakeside area to be concreted in order to make it access easier for the sailing of boats. Despite the popularity of boat sailing with adult men, images of this activity almost exclusively focus on children, and at Saltwell Park where specific provision had been included into the design of the park for model yachting, images of the lake focus on the rowing boats, rather than on model boats. Figure 4.3 above of boys congregated around the lake edge watching two boats sailing has a number of striking features. Firstly, the boy nearest to the camera is wearing shabby ill fitting clothes while the small boy in the far left hand corner near the grotto, carrying a small boat, is smartly dressed. The implication here is that while all boys may have indeed been fascinated with the sailing of these boats, they were not obtainable to all. Furthermore, the image itself may have served to illustrate an idealised notion of the boating lake as a cohesive space for play, with boating depicted as a universal interest of boys. The poem ‘Sailing the Boats’ by George Cooper in the volume Happy Days for Boys and Girls elaborates further this idyll of cohesive play. ‘Archie owns a schooner, Jack a man-o’-war, Joe a clipper A 1, named the Morning Star; Charlie sails a match-box, dignified a yawl’. Here four children armed with different boats, one made from a match-box, play

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64 ‘Model Yachting in 1883 and 1884’, Boy’s Own Paper, 8 March 1884.
65 Tyrrel E Biddle, ‘Model Yachting, Boy’s Own Paper, 25 August 1883.
66 ‘Local and District’, Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail, 18 October 1888, p. 3.
67 ‘Local and District Notes’, Newcastle Courant, 7 September 1888, p. 3.
68 ‘Local and District News’, Shields Daily Gazette, 28 June 1888, p. 3.
69 George Cooper, ‘Sailing the Boats’, in Happy Days for Boys and Girls, ed. by Horace B. Fuller (Philadelphia, PA: Porter & Coates, 1877), p. 305. A yawl is a fishing boat with two-masts which was popular as a racing
together in an imaginative game where the boats are ‘bound for China – that’s across the pond’, interacting with each other and with the environment ‘there’s a fleet of lilies, we go scudding round, bumblebees for sailors, and they’re fast aground’. Secondly, the boats which are on the lake are much simpler than the specially designed racing boats available to purchase in toy stores at the time. *Boy’s Own Paper* reported in 1881 in an article providing ‘practical hints on model yacht sailing’ that while ‘toy boats’ had been ‘used by English boys from the earliest days of naval architecture’ it was ‘only of late years that men of technical knowledge have given their attention to the production of model yachts, which though without helmsmen, are so scientifically constructed, and have their sails so well balanced, as to be able to compete in races’. Simpler toy boats and home-made boats were far more accessible to children than the racing boats belonging to members of model yacht clubs. These boats may not have been as durable, and the quantity of shaped wood found in the lake bed at Whitworth Park attests to this, but they were lightweight and easily set afloat by boys.

While home-made boats could be fashioned for sailing, other floating objects could also be used in the place of boats in order to allow a child to play directly, rather than just observing. Two cotton bobbins were found in the mud deposit at the bottom of the lake, one was removed during excavation and the other during the wet sieving of this deposit. As mentioned, items in the lake bed were almost invariably related to children’s activities; drink’s bottles, toys, shoes, graphite pencils, twigs and bits of shaped wood. The cotton bobbin was found without thread on it, even though we have found well preserved threads, leather straps and horse hair in the lake bed. This suggests then that the cotton bobbin was empty when it was brought into the park setting or at least empty when it was deposited in the lake bed. A cotton bobbin would have floated initially and may have acted as a makeshift sailing vessel for those who did not have a boat of any description. Objects which resembled boats even less may have also been tested for the potential to float, some successfully and others perhaps less so; the saucers for example may have ended up on the  

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vessel in the late-Victorian period, inspiring the creation of the Humber Yawl Club in 1883, one of the first sailing clubs in England.

70 Cooper, p. 305.

71 ‘Practical Hints on Model Yacht Sailing’, *Boys Own Paper*, 2 April 1881.
lake bed when their owners tested their ability to float. Leaves, empty nut shells and kernel halves would have been more successful as floating objects.

Floating objects engaged children in imaginative play. In Robert Louis Stevenson’s *A Child’s Garden of Verses* (1905) boats occur frequently, reflecting the author’s interests but also his time spent in imaginative play rather than physical play due to childhood ill health.72 ‘My Bed is a Boat’, ‘My Ship and I’, ‘Pirate Story’, ‘The Land of Counterpane’, and ‘The Land of Story Books’ all tell of setting sail in vessels ranging from a bed, model boats (with toy soldiers as crew), and even a woven basket. The poem ‘The Little Land’ meanwhile tells of a child closing their eyes and imagining themselves ‘sailing far away to the pleasant Land of Play; to the fairy land a far, where the Little People are; where the clover-tops are trees, and the rain-pools are the seas, and the leaves, like little ships, sail about on tiny trips’.73 The poem later describes sailing on one of these leaf boats and the creatures seen from across

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73 Stevenson, pp. 73-4.
the water. In these poems boats and water provide imagery for countless imagined adventures involving animals, fairy-tale creatures, nature and toys. Tales of toys coming to life were popular at the time, as they continue to be today, and toy soldiers and dolls in particular seem to form part of these narratives, forming an integral part of imaginative play wherever this took place. Involvement in nautical adventures may provide one possible explanation for the misadventure of the toy soldier excavated from Whitworth Park lake bed. It is interesting how gender is not explicit in Stevenson’s poems, even though it may be presumed that he was drawing on his own childhood experiences, and also significant to note how androgynous many of the illustrations accompanying the poems appear to be (see figure 4.18). Stevenson’s book seems to allow for girls as well as boys to identify with the stories, reflecting an interesting distinction between the greater fluidity of gender in imaginative play than may have been reflected in the manufacturing of toys for purchase, and the performance of play in public spaces such as the park.

4.3.3 Grassed Areas

Figure 4.19: (Not Attributed), The Mound in Whitworth Park (1906). Postcard. Courtesy of Bruce Anderson (Private Collection).
Even where space was restricted, it has already been stated that parks sought to offer grassy areas as well as formal walks. While Saltwell Park and Greenhead Park offered particularly large areas of turf, Whitworth Park was limited to the smaller raised area known as the mound. Figure 4.19 above shows children sitting on the mound during a performance at the bandstand. The sloping nature of the grassy area, the views afforded from the top and the plants and objects present there would have been important to those playing on the mound. Newspaper reports frequently mention how the mound was of particular interest to children, a sentiment which appears to be backed up by archaeological excavation. The *Manchester Guardian* reports in 1903 that the mound was a popular spot for children to ‘roll and stretch to their hearts content’, to play ‘walking, crawling, and tumbling’ over the logs deliberately placed to provide ‘mild gymnastic training’ as well as being a favourite location for ‘opening the paper parcel with chunks of bread and butter, or perchance bread and jam’.  

74 During the Whitworth Park excavations, Trench 4 intersected the mound at the point where it adjoined the path visible in the above figure 4.19. Context 4002 revealed a number of interesting play related artefacts which provide insight into the play which occurred in this area.  

75 Eight glass marbles and two ceramic marbles were uncovered, part of a broken dolls leg and a broken piece of clay pipe with scratch marks consistent with drawing or scratching the ground were also found. That these items were found in this context suggests that they were part of the day-to-day detritus of park use before it was levelled for landscaping work. This most likely took place in 1953 when the park was modernised by covering paths and removing features.

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75 Cobb, et al., pp. 30-32, 38.
By far the most common artefacts found during the Whitworth Park excavations were marbles and knucklebones. As mentioned above, Context 4002 alone produced 10 marbles from a 6x5metre trench and it is almost certain that these marbles pre-date 1953. While some of the glass marbles found were commercially produced toys, available at toy shops, other glass marbles excavated had originally formed the stopper in a ‘codd’ bottle designed to hold fizzy drinks. Patented in 1873 by Hiram Codd, these bottles were quickly adopted by drinks manufacturers as they solved the problem of successfully sealing fizzy drinks in upright bottles (see figure 4.20). The ingenious design allowed for the bottle to be resealed simply by turning the bottle upside down and shaking, allowing it to be easily transported, for example into the park. While some children collected used codd bottles to return in order to make a small amount of money, many others smashed the bottles in

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76 Gardener. See above for Reference.
order to reach the glass marble inside. This activity of children meant that codd bottles fell out of favour as cheaper alternatives became available. Until the invention of machine methods to commercially produce glass marbles in 1905 in the USA, most marbles were hand crafted using tools such as ‘marble scissors’ in Germany predominantly. In 1861, Boy’s Own Magazine ran an article claiming foreign marbles to be ‘prodigiously cheaper...than our own English marbles, but much worse’, further advising all boys to forsake all foreign imports in order to properly honour the game. While this of course reflects the way in which industry was bound up in national identity, it also reflects changes in the British toy market. Foreign imports drove prices down and marbles which had previously been predominantly made from clay, known as ‘commies’ due to being so common, now increasingly diversified. For the player of marbles at the turn of the century, glass, ceramic and ‘bottle washer’ (from the tops of codd bottles) marbles were all accessible. It was not until the 1920s that mass-produced glass marbles became the most common form of marble. The excavated marbles from context 4002 reflect this diversity. Two clay marbles were found the rest being glass, half bottle washers and half commercially produced.

The Boy’s Own Magazine piece lists sixteen variations of games involving marbles and describes how these are played. It also describes the correct manner of holding and shooting a taw (marble), emphasising the skill required to play these games successfully. That the author feels the need to elaborate on the correct manner of playing marbles suggests that further variations of playing with them had developed and while many of the games elaborated on in the article were still being played, it is evidently not exhaustive. Of the sixteen games detailed in the piece, a number of similarities are clear. At least eight of the games involved the contenders playing ‘for keeps’, that is the players taking part gambled their marbles for the chance to win more or lose the ones they had, as opposed to playing ‘for fair’ whereby marbles were returned to their owners at the end of the game. Three of the games required additional equipment, but this equipment was easily found on the street, for example a board or a wall, while one game required a die. Ten of the games involved drawing lines or shapes on the ground or else digging holes in order to shoot at.

78 ‘Description of Games at Marbles’, Boy’s Own Magazine, 1 April 1861, p. 159.
79 ‘Description of Games at Marbles’, Boy’s Own Magazine, 1 April 1861, p. 159.
For children in the park, this could be easily achieved by scratching into the ground, either onto the soft brick blaze of the path or into the turf and soil of the mound, particularly when the ground was dry. Holes could easily be dug out of the turf and the slope of the mound potentially added further complexity to games which already gave opportunities for children to demonstrate superior skills to their opponents. The fragment of pipe stem showing patterns of wear consistent with scratching a hard surface would have been ideal for drawing lines into the park surface or for creating small holes in order to facilitate various games of marbles. The number of marbles lost, discarded or left deliberately on the mound suggests not only that this area was popular for the playing of these games, and that marbles themselves were considered to be fairly disposable, but also that play in this space may have been quite rapid and spontaneous. Games of marbles struck up and dispersed quickly, while marbles which had rolled out of sight, perhaps partially hidden by the grass, were not carefully looked for, suggesting that the play had moved on.

Some girls undoubtedly played with marbles and indeed as Laurie Wilkie points out, these are ‘non-gendered objects’, however, it is often referred to at the time as a game for boys.\textsuperscript{80} Karin Calvert has suggested that games marketed towards girls tended to be dainty, easily broken toys designed to be played with individually and usually at home.\textsuperscript{81} Games marketed towards boys however tended to be more robust and designed to be played collaboratively with other boys, encouraging competition and the development of skills.\textsuperscript{82} Marbles, especially with the emphasis on either competitive playing ‘for keeps’ or else gentleman’s rules ‘for fair’, seem to fit this latter pattern clearly.\textsuperscript{83} Not all games played in the park were so rigidly gendered. While marbles may have been directed towards boys, the game of ‘jacks’, known also as knucklebones or fivestones (see figure 4.21), was sometimes considered to be a game for girls, although in its ancient Greek tradition men played a variation of the women and girls game whereby the faces of the sheep’s knucklebones (the original playing piece used) represented different numerical values, a tradition which led to

\textsuperscript{80} Laura Wilkie, ‘Not Merely Child’s Play: Creating a Historical Archaeology of Children and Childhood’, in \textit{Children and Material Culture} ed. by Derevenski, pp. 100 – 113 (p. 106).
\textsuperscript{81} Calvert, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{82} Calvert, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{83} ‘Description of Games at Marbles’, \textit{Boy’s Own Magazine}, 1 April 1861, p. 159.
Like marbles, jacks was played in a similar manner, crouched down close to the ground, often with an audience. Opie and Opie have noted the ceremonial nature of games like marbles and jacks, whereby the players were often surrounded by observers who took part vicariously in the game, much like the sailing of model boats mentioned above. The experience of play in the park was perhaps not always experienced firsthand but rather through the play acts of others, whether boys or girls.

![Figure 4.21: Alan Seabright (Photographer), Jacks/Knucklebones or Fivestones, Excavated from Whitworth Park (2013). Courtesy of the Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project.](image)

The excavations in Whitworth Park revealed a number of ceramic knucklebones as well as one sheep’s knucklebone revealing the continued tradition of repurposing found objects into toy items to be played with alongside bought objects (figure 4.21). Many variations of throw exist in the game, however, the basic premise was simply that the player threw the knucklebones into the air and tried to catch them on the back of their hand, usually in a specific order. With the emphasis on skill and the participation of many players, ‘jacks’ is not unlike the game of marbles, although the emphasis on competition seems to be

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less pronounced when written about. This may have been where the idea that the game was suitable for girls originated. As mentioned, different versions of the game existed for male and female participants in ancient Greece and this seems to have been the case in the late-Victorian period also. In Alice Bertha Gomme’s collected volume of *Traditional Games* (1894) she details the variations of the game ‘fivestones’ in the various parts of Britain. Having detailed at length the complicated ritual and sequence of throwing and catching displayed in a game played by a newspaper boy in competition with other boys, she goes on to describe two girls playing. ‘Their game was not so long nor so complete as the above. They did not throw all four stones down as a preliminary stage…nor were they particular as to which stones they picked up…they knew nothing of numbering or naming them…they had places chalked on the pavement where they recorded successful ‘goes,’ and the game was played in a ring’. The girls referred to their game as ‘jacks’ while the boys referred to theirs as ‘dabs’ yet this was not the only pronounced difference in the two games. The girls’ game was described as being shorter, less complicated and less skilled as well as being less competitive. While girls recorded successful ‘goes’, in the boys game the author states that ‘if mistakes were made another player took the stones’, an emphasis on competition which was not present in the older forms of the game such as ‘hucklebones’, ‘dailies’ or ‘dibbs’. This gendered distinction between competitive and non-competitive, skilled and non-skilled seems to reveal a particular expectation of normative play for girls and boys which was not necessarily embodied in play practices in the park.

While prescribed play for girls may have been directed differently to boys’ play, it is important to consider the ways in which girls’ play in the park was adapted from play at home and how this could subvert the prescribed modes of play set out for them. Dolls and tea sets have already been mentioned briefly. They were present in the assemblages found in the lake bed, but it is clear the mound would also have formed an important site for girls to play with these items. In her detailed study of the experience of creating and playing with dolls in America from the beginning of the nineteenth-century to the end of the twentieth-century, Miriam Formanek-Brunell demonstrates how dolls embodied particular modes of

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87 Gomme, p. 127.
88 Gomme, p. 123.
female identity and along with their associated artefacts (tea sets, clothes etc) sought to inculcate girls with ideals of domesticity, consumerism, maternalism and social etiquette. Caring for, mothering and holding doll’s tea parties and picnics were solitary games which when played in the park may have been easily adapted to engage with other girls also playing with dolls. As mentioned earlier, show and tell with toys was significant to children and toys of different provenances, some shop bought, some homemade, could be played with collaboratively, with children recognising the relative value and identity of each other’s toy. Problems may have arisen however when one or more child refused to follow established practices of play. While playing outside of the prescribed rules of a specific game of marbles could be dealt with easily by a referee and other players who could ban a player from joining, imaginative play, such as that involving dolls, was not as easy to control.

Within fiction problems arose when children subverted the manufacturer’s intent in playing with their toys. In Ethel’s Adventures in Doll Country (1880), Ethel refuses to treat her dolls as her children, blaming them and punishing them for her own misdemeanours. Subverting her role as a girl further, she engages her dolls in games with her brother, court marshalling them, conducting mock trials and even executing them after finding them guilty. While this is clearly acceptable for her brother to do with his toy soldiers, Ethel’s perceived mistreatment of her dolls leads to one of them running away. In attempting to find her missing doll one night Ethel stumbles in Doll Land and is herself being put on trial for failing to treat her dolls as expected. Predictably, Ethel reforms and becomes an exemplary maternal figure to her dolls. Yet outside of fiction, the experience of play with dolls may not have been that far removed from Ethel’s original conduct. Formanek-Brunell’s study showed that girls frequently subverted the underlying political and social message of their dolls by refusing to play in the prescribed manner. Laurie Wilkie demonstrates how this may be represented in the archaeological record in her reading of a 1920-22 garbage pit in Santa Monica, California. The smashed porcelain dolls heads, of which there were at least 5, represent not just carelessness but perhaps a deliberate act of breaking and destroying a toy which was intended to provoke nurturing in its owner. In Whitworth Park, context 4002

90 Clara Bradford, Ethel’s Adventures in the Doll Country (Milton Keynes: Rare Books, 1880).
91 Formanek-Brunell, pp. 7-8, 33.
92 Wilkie, p. 103-4.
revealed part of a ceramic broken doll’s arm or leg. While it is not clear how this was broken, whether by accident or intent, by the doll’s owner or by another child, it is perhaps an unusual find given that dolls were expensive, precious items and it was possible to have a broken limb fixed at a doll’s hospital or else at home. That the limb was discarded completely in this case suggests a lack of care on behalf of its owner. This potentially could reveal an intentional or purely incidental subversion of expected gendered play. When considering toys in the park therefore it is important to be aware that there was likely to be considerable variation in the manner in which they were played with and that this play may not have neatly fit into expected models of behaviour.

4.3.4 Imaginative play

Not all play on the grassy areas of the park relied on play objects. While natural objects like logs, sticks and slopes were discussed in relation to idealised notions of ‘natural play’ in the last chapter, these objects in the landscape undoubtedly formed a significant part of the imaginary and make-belief games played widely in the park. Furthermore these imaginary games were often informed by knowledge already procured from books, stories and actual events of the time. For the Victorians, the concept of children’s imaginative play was particularly significant. Tracing Victorian representations of play in literature, Bruce Nadal states that ‘an insistence on the value of imagination and creativity’, was in part a ‘reaction against the rule-making and rationalist appropriation of play’ which characterised adult discussions of ‘rational recreation’ and sought to codify rules and regulations for games such as badminton, cricket and football.93 Drawing on Alice in Wonderland, he notes how when Alice plays croquet, rules are shown to be absurd and incapable of regulating experience. Carroll’s message is thereby revealed to be ‘inventing, creating, imagining – these are the real values that result from play’. Imaginative play was not devoid of a moral message however and instead emphasis was placed on the idea of children learning for themselves, becoming self-reliant, an educational idea which drew strongly from the nursery movement of Froebel, made popular in England by Johannes and Bertha Ronge in their book A Practical

93 Nadel, p. 28.
Guide to the English Kinder-Garten (1855). Their message was that creative play could improve a child’s ‘power of representation...his faculties of perception, -his thinking, reasoning faculties, as well as his imagination’, ⁹⁴ and when combined with physical activity, ‘there is not a muscle in the body, nor an organ of the mind...that by these plays does not require its necessary stimulus’. ⁹⁵ In literature the imagination was further seen as a tool by which children could improve their living and working conditions and transcend their background, drawing on the notion of self-help which underpinned many institutions such as parks as well as free schools and libraries. Fictional portraits of children by Dickens, Eliot and Kingsley emphasised the hardships and frailties of children who retained their naivety and innocence in spite of their exploitation, while Hans Christian Anderson’s tale of ‘The Little Match Girl’ bleakly portrays the power of the imagination as a tool by which children could transcend reality and gain comfort. ⁹⁶ Imagination was characterised as a God-given ability, bringing children closer to religion, and in the case of the Little Match Girl, delivering her to heaven.

The emphasis on imagination remained in children’s literature towards the end of the century. Introducing his study of Children’s Ways (1897) child psychologist James Sully wrote that ‘one of the few things we seemed to be certain of with respect to child-nature was that it is fancy-full...childhood, we all know, is the age for dreaming; for living a life of happy make-believe’. ⁹⁷ G K Chesterton, writing in 1915 about the cult of childhood accredited Hans Christian Anderson for providing English children with an ‘educational emotion which feels that domesticity is not dull but rather fantastic; that sense of the fairyland of the furniture, and the travel and adventure of the farmyard’. ⁹⁸ This is perfectly expressed in the memories of a letter writer to the Huddersfield Examiner in 1920. Of playing on the terrace in Greenhead Park, the author notes that ‘the terrace was a stone terrace and tangible, but the house, palace or mansion belonging to it was a house not built with hands...It could be any style of architecture you wished...It could bristle with turrets

⁹⁵ Ronge, p. 56.
and towers and castellated battlements, green shutters and striped awnings, hanging
baskets and hoisted flags...The rough rocks behind the terrace could be furniture, or horses,
or bicycles, at will'.\textsuperscript{99} For adults therefore play in the park was expected to be in-part
fantastical, play which could be difficult for adults to understand. As Sully states ‘it is hard
for us elders to get back to this childish way of looking at things’,\textsuperscript{100} a sentiment revealed in
the way in which children’s authors of the time such as Lewis Carroll, J M Barrie and C S
Lewis were revered and have been subject to in-depth investigation by later critics.\textsuperscript{101}

Certainly many adults at the time seem to be fascinated with the way in which
children engaged in imaginary play, and particularly in the way they appeared to challenge
or subvert notions of childhood identity with imaginative play. For his contribution to
George R. Sims’ book, \textit{Living London} (1902), writer Edwin Pugh described the street games
of working-class children in London. He describes boys playing at riding or being horses,
trains, Red Indians, pirates and, especially popular during the time of the Boer War, acting
as soldiers.\textsuperscript{102} Girls meanwhile, he states, play at going shopping or being mothers, a role
not too far removed from the responsibility which some older girls already had, caring for
their younger siblings and helping out around the house. It is important not to overstate this
gender distinction as indeed Pugh states that boys ‘of a gentle disposition’ would join the
girls in domestic role-play and it is certain that girls would also have also joined in with the
boy’s games, acting to nurse injured soldiers for example but perhaps also in more
aggressive roles.\textsuperscript{103} Children might have gone further and deliberately sought to engage in
play deemed suitable to the other gender in order to challenge these distinctions and to
make statements about themselves. What is clear is that children sought to assimilate the
roles of adults they witnessed around them and in the stories they were exposed to.
Through her interpretation of children playing at being the ‘Bloofer lady’ in \textit{Dracula}, Leslie
Ann Minot reads into imitation in play a desire by children to act out the things going on
around them which they may not have fully understood and indeed may have been fearful

\textsuperscript{100} Sully, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{101} See Catherine Robson, \textit{Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of Victorian Gentlemen} (Oxford: Princeton
University Press, 2001); Rose, \textit{The Case of Peter Pan}; Kincaid, \textit{Child-Loving}.
\textsuperscript{102} Edwin Pugh, ‘Some London Street Amusements’ in \textit{Living London}, Vol. 3 ed. by George R. Sims (London:
Casell & Company, 1902), pp. 266-71 (p. 269).
\textsuperscript{103} Pugh, p. 271.
By imitating these roles the fear could be mitigated and controlled, thus the game becomes not just a reflection of adult behaviours, but a cathartic act of acceptance. Pugh notes children mimicking stern parents admonishing their charges, and certainly figures of fear, authority and horror could be played out in the park. One potential example of this may have involved mimicry of the park keeper, whose authority in the park setting was absolute and who had the power to refuse access to the park itself.

The park landscape was fundamentally important to these role-plays. In pretending to be adults, animals, or machines, children reconfigured the reality around themselves so that the grassy turf of the mound could become a mountain, a battlefield or a streetscape. A hollow at the base of a tree may have represented a home, and the lake may have become the seven seas to a young pirate. The act of walking up the mound, sitting at the base of a tree or gazing across the lake takes on a symbolic resonance, exaggerating the action and creating a different bodily experience. Fear, comfort, fatigue, excitement could be evoked through the imagined symbolism of these spaces, even while the park space itself may have created feelings of happiness, relaxation, inclusion or exclusion. The imagined emotions of play did not entirely transplant the emotions provoked by the real space, this was after all pretending. Theorists of play might see this as an ‘as if’ rather than a ‘what if’ distinction. In the act of make-believing, players are acting ‘as if’ they are something else, a horse, parent, pirate etc, and ‘as if’ the park mound was a mountain. This is separate to the act of imagining an alternative reality in which they are no longer themselves, and no longer in the park, a ‘what if’ this was a sea. The children playing ‘make-believe’ do not actually believe themselves to be a horse or parent or pirate, nor do they actually believe themselves to live in the park, or that the park is a wilderness to be explored. The claim of Piaget, that children are unable to distinguish emotionally between the imaginary and the real, has been discredited by the work of developmental psychologists who claim that this awareness of the difference between make-belief and reality is developed by the age of three.

105 Schwartzman, Transformations, p. 7.
106 See for example Adrienne Samuels and Marjorie Taylor, ‘Children’s Ability to Distinguish Fantasy Events from Real-Life Events’, *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 12 (4) (1994), 417-27; Claire Golomb and
An awareness of what is imagined and what is real does not prevent the player from feeling emotion. One example which developmental psychologist Shaun Nichols draws our attention to is making mud pies. When children make mud pies they are pretending that these are actual foodstuffs, they may feel proud of their pies and may even begin to feel hungry, yet the children do not actually eat the pies.\(^{107}\) During ‘as if’ play the lived experience is multi-faceted; the emotional response to being in the park is layered with that of being in the game. Skolnick and Bloom argue that ‘each time we encounter a new fictional story, we create a new world’.\(^{108}\) The latest game of ‘make-belief’ replaces the landscape of the previous one, while the park landscape remains constant behind it. For non-participants, for example the adults watching or those children unable to join in due to age, disability or social barrier, the actions of those within the game could be incomprehensible and yet formed part of the observer’s experience of being in the park. For those within the game, the experience of the park landscape was transient and unfixed, experienced in multiple ways, often through collaboration with other children.

4.3.5 Organised games

In contrast to children’s imaginative play, some games which took place in the park were organised by adults for children. Figure 4.1 showed a game of tug-of-war taking place in a London park. While there are no similar images of the case study parks to show this kind of organised game taking place, a number of sources suggest that this may have been likely. In January 1914, the Manchester Courier ran a newspaper article claiming that approximately 203,000 children had taken part in organised games in the participating Manchester parks over a period of 29 weeks.\(^{109}\) Similar movements in all major cities of Britain occurred at this time. Organised games involving races such as three-legged races and egg and spoon races

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\(^{109}\) ‘Organised Games in Parks’, Manchester Courier, 24 January 1914, p. 10.
had been a regular fixture of fetes and children’s picnics in parks like Saltwell Park and Greenhead Park for many years. The inclusion of so many smaller parks as places where planned children’s games could take place was unprecedented and reveals a growing emphasis on childhood fitness at the time. This will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter. It is worth noting however that the excavations in Whitworth Park uncovered a gun in the lake bed deposits. The gun has been identified as a ratting gun, or a starting pistol, potentially used in the management of this sort of organised sports. As mentioned earlier on in the chapter, a number of sources distinguished between the sort of play possible in a playground and that in a park. By the end of the era of study, these distinctions seem to have become increasingly blurred, perhaps prompting the *Art and Design* article in the first place. The mass participation of children in organised games in all parks suggests that this form of play also formed a significant aspect in the experience of play in the park for children. Play in Britain’s public parks formed a significant part of the childhood experience of many children from a wide range of backgrounds. This play involved deep interaction with the landscape of the park as well as with the material culture of play which was brought into the park, or else repurposed when in the space. Acts of play are difficult to interpret yet reveal attempts to negotiate identity and expected behaviours imposed on children by adults.
1866 Manchester Park Bye-Laws

1. In construing these bye-laws the expression "the Park" shall mean, comprise, and apply to every public park or place of recreation now or hereafter belonging to or vested in or under the control of the Corporation, either within or beyond the limits of the said city; and all words importing the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include females, and the singular to include the plural, and the plural the singular, unless the contrary as to gender or number is expressly prohibited.

2. Every person (except the officers and servants of the Corporation) shall leave the park by the time the bell, which is rung for fifteen minutes before the closing of the same, has ceased to ring.

3. No person in the park shall conduct himself in a disorderly manner, or be intoxicated, or gamble, or use any improper or indecent language, or occasion any nuisance or annoyance, or sell or offer to sell any refreshment without express authority from the Corporation, or take any dog into the park, or if a male intrude on or use any playground or place set apart for the use of females, or if a female intrude on or use any playground or place set aside for the use of males, or (without the sanction of the Corporation) take any vehicle or horse into the park, or destroy or injure any tree, shrub, plant, or flower, or pluck any flowers or leaves, or take or disturb the nest of any bird, or obstruct, hinder, or prevent any officer or servant of the Corporation in the execution of his duty, or (on Sunday) use any playground, or play at any game, or play any music or musical instrument.

4. No Person shall sing, preach, lecture, or take part in any meeting for political, religious, or other purposes, or take part in any public show, performance, or demonstration in the park, or shall distribute printed or written matter therein, or solicit or collect money or money's worth in connection with any meeting, performance, recitation, or representation.

5. Any servant of the Corporation may exclude any person from the park who is offensively dirty, or not dressed in decent clothes, and may also remove therefrom any person who shall infringe any of these bye-laws, or any part thereof, or any public law.

6. Every person who shall commit any breach of any of the foregoing bye-laws shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds, and the Justices before whom any penalty imposed by these bye-laws is sought to be recovered may order the whole or part only of such a penalty to be paid.

7. When and so soon as the foregoing bye-laws shall come into operation, the bye-laws made by the Corporation on the 4th day of March, 1698 shall be and the same are hereby repealed.

Figure 4.22: 1896 Bye-Laws, Manchester Parks and Open Spaces MS. GB127.Council Minutes/Parks and Cemeteries Committee/Second Series 8, 22 July 1896.
4.4 Surveillance

Supervision, surveillance and regulation formed a significant part of the childhood experience in the park. The park offered children a complex and unique landscape, facilitating forms of play not always accessible at home, in school or in the other areas of the city which children played in. However, as has been demonstrated, the type of children’s play the park was designed to facilitate did not always match the play which actually took place. This occasionally led to conflict and attempts were made to suppress particular forms of play activity. Likewise play could be used as a tool to negotiate and occasionally subvert the structures of authority represented in the park. Supervision, surveillance and regulation were undertaken by three groups of park users; the park keeper and other park staff, parents and other adults, and by older siblings and the children themselves who engaged in self-regulation or regulation of the group. This will be discussed in depth here using a wide range of sources to illustrate the way in which this occurred and the resulting effect. Many of the misdemeanours detailed in the Parks and Cemeteries Committee Meeting Minutes (PCCMM) from various councils are the result of a bye-law having been breached and an attempt to prosecute the guilty party. Regulation by parents and adults is not always as explicit, however some evidence is found in the PCCMMs along with occasional newspaper accounts. Evidence for parental supervision will therefore be provided by engaging in a brief discussion of lines of sight first mentioned in section 4.2. Some evidence of older sibling supervision and children’s self-regulation is also mentioned in newspapers and will be supported with further evidence from the PCCMMs.

4.4.1 Park Keepers

The most explicit attempt to control user behaviour in the park was in the creation of park bye-laws and the introduction of park employees to enforce these. Allen Ruff, historian of Philip’s Park, Manchester, states that following the opening of the three public parks in Manchester and Salford in 1846, the Corporation was immediately forced to address staffing for these spaces as ‘no one had been made responsible for the management of the
parks, and the necessity for such action seems to have taken the committee by surprise’. A staffing structure was drawn up which consisted of ‘a park keeper to ...act as lodge-keeper’, responsible for the opening and closing of gates, ‘who shall also possess a competent knowledge of gardening, and who shall have the entire control of other men employed in the park’. Alongside the park keeper was a ‘second lodge-keeper, to act under the directions of the park keeper’ and ‘two spadesmen or labourers, to be employed in keeping the grounds in order, and for the general protection of the property’. The Park Keeper was responsible at once for ‘propagating and growing plants for flower beds and borders’ and ‘preserving order and enforcing bye-laws’. His two assistants were both to assist with the gardening duties of the park and maintaining order, particularly at opening and closing time, but held different responsibilities covering cleaning and planting. In his 1937 book Municipal Parks, W. W. Pettigrew, Parks Superintendent in Manchester, wrote that ‘a considerable divergence exists regarding the recognised designation...of the outside staff employed in public parks in various localities in the British Isles...the officials responsible...are variously described in different towns as assistant superintendants, curators, head gardeners, park-keepers, caretakers, and sometimes merely as foremen’. Despite the regional differentiation, all public parks employed uniformed staff whose job was to oversee the behaviour of those who used the park and to enforce the bye-laws. For the purposes of clarity the man in charge of those working in the park will now be referred to as the ‘Park Keeper’.

Opening and closing the park gates, patrolling the grounds and being visible, and reprimanding those acting in a manner deemed inappropriate were important duties of the park employee’s job. The times of opening along with the park bye-laws were posted on the park notice board (see figure 4.23) and the implementation of both were subject to the park keeper’s discretion. Fifteen minutes prior to closing the park, the park keeper would patrol the grounds ringing a bell in order to alert visitors to the imminent closing of the park (see

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111 Ruff, p. 52.
112 Ruff, p. 52.
115 GML-GB127-2S1, 30 March 1883, p. 329.
The park keeper was often stationed and housed in a lodge house adjacent to the park gates, as shown in figure 4.24. Positioning him here was symbolic on two levels, the first to emulate the park keeper’s role on large estates, and secondly in placing him in control of those entering and leaving the park. Those banned from entering the park, for example the ‘offensively dirty’, could be deterred at the gate. Restricted access, by means of opening and closing the gates, or by subjecting visitors to the gaze of the park keeper reminded them of the system of governance in place within the park. The uniform varied between towns but often emulated police uniforms, complete with badge, cap, buttoned overcoat and a whistle to be blown on witnessing a misdemeanour. In providing these uniforms the parks sub-committee ensured the visible hierarchy of authority in the park, and distinguished employees from members of the public. The large ornate gates, large lodge houses reminiscent of upper-class dominance, and the uniformed keeper at the gates, acted as reminders to the public, including children, to regulate their own behaviour.

However, when misdemeanours did occur it was the Park Keeper’s job to record the offenders name and address, or if the offence was severe enough, to detain them until the police arrived. The offender was usually requested to attend a hearing of the Magistrate or Parks Committee in order to present evidence and receive the appropriate fine. The Park Keeper would usually appear as the sole witness at these hearings, suggesting great faith in his credibility. Children were by no means exempt from this system of punishment and indeed appear often in the meeting minutes of the various Parks Committees.

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116 GML-GB127-2S8, 22 July 1896.
Further facilitating the park keepers in their role were the local bye-laws, displayed at the entrance to the park. These showed minor differences between towns, although
Manchester Council referred to other city’s bye-laws in creating their own. While not directed exclusively at children, these bye-laws contained a number of clauses designed specifically to regulate children’s behaviour. The most obvious of these from the 1896 Manchester bye-laws being that members of the opposite gender should not enter the playgrounds set out for either girls or boys, and that on a Sunday no games at all should be played, later rescinded by the 1912 update. An additional law was added stating that ‘an unauthorised person shall not at any time in any part of the park cut or displace any turf, or uproot or displace any gorse or other plant’. Clauses were also added forbidding the sailing of model boats on the lake, to regulate the behaviour of those taking trips in the rowing boat, and to prevent anyone from standing, sitting or lying on any part of the flowerbeds. Changes to the bye-laws took place infrequently but it was the park goer’s responsibility to ensure their behaviour was compatible with the latest bye-laws. This was particularly the case given the laws in certain parks, such as Saltwell, allowed particular activities, such as sailing model yachts or ice skating, only on specific days of the week. Cycling, rounders, cricket and football were other activities allowed only at certain times of the year and in certain parks only. Many adults and children fell foul of these bye-laws and the Parks Committee minutes contain many accounts of prosecutions for these offences. Stealing cherries and damaging trees along with fishing in the park lakes were frequent offences committed by children, while wilful damage was one of the more serious offences. To further advertise the bye-laws within the park informative signs were introduced, such as the ‘keep off the grass’ signs with which parks are synonymous. This prompted some to protest at the perceived over-regulation of the park. In 1886, the Huddersfield Chronicle ran a letter protesting these signs, asking if the park was ‘simply an exhibition for horticultural display, or is it for the use of the people?’ In 1890, Moonshine ran a cartoon declaring that further restrictions would be untenable (See figure 4.25). Finally in 1900 the Newcastle Courant printed a comic scene between father and son discussing the entitlement of the people to use the parks (see figure 4.26).

118 TW-CB.SU/41-4, 28 December 1887.
119 ‘Police Courts’ Newcastle Courant, 20 July 1883, p. 5.
120 ‘Police Courts’ Newcastle Courant, 13 July 1883, p. 5.
121 TW-CB.SU/41-3, 25 July 1883.
Figure 4.25: Detail from ‘A Walk in the Parks’, *Moonshine*, 5th July 1890

Figure 4.26: Detail from ‘In Lighter Vein’, *Newcastle Courant*, 3rd November 1900, p. 6.
4.4.2 Parent/Adult regulation

Not all misdemeanours reported in the Parks Committee minutes were as a result of breached bye-laws. Some misdemeanours, not attributable to one individual child, resulted in little more than a telling off, either by the park keeper or by a parent or other supervisor. From their inclusion in reports to the Parks Committees, we can surmise that many would also have been dealt with by parents and other adult supervisors at the time of the offence. The Manchester Parks Committee detail repeated tales of stone throwing which went on unresolved for three years in Butler Street playground, on the border between Ancoats and Miles Platting. Meanwhile a report from 1922 states that children in Whitworth Park were constantly climbing up or ‘throwing stones and mud’ at the statue of Edward VII, suggesting these were not particularly unusual events. These more severe examples of what can perhaps be termed ‘naughty behaviour’ certainly resulted in involvement of a park keeper or supervisor, although these children were never named and no record is given of them receiving punishment. A complaint from a lady whose dress was marked by sitting on a bench in Saltwell Park in 1913, drew the comment that the cleanliness of benches was difficult to ensure with ‘so many children climbing about and writing with chalk’. This statement also does not name individual children or detail their admonishment suggesting that these are likely to have been the sort of behaviours which went unpunished.

Park keepers were not the only supervisory presence in the park for children. Parents, guardians and adults more generally also undertook to watch, regulate and discipline children as they played. This supervision was often in collaboration with one another, as shown by accounts of youthful anti-social behaviour which occurred in both Saltwell Park and in Greenhead Park. In 1894, Gateshead council engaged two plain-clothed policemen to respond to complaints over the ‘improper behaviour of young men occupying seats in the Park, who by use of foul language and filthy remarks are a public disgrace...ladies especially being the butt of their course innuendo and Sunday afternoon the time of their greatest activity’. In Greenhead Park a similar problem occurred first in

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123 GML-GB127-2S1, 21 April 1883; GML-GB127-2S1, 16 April 1884; GML-GB127-2S2, 4 December 1885.
124 TW-CB.SU/41-11, 30 July 1913.
125 TW-CB.SU/41-5, 2 April, 1894.
1892 when the park benches were filled with youths on a Sunday, and again in 1894 when youths and young girls found amusement by making ‘very personal remarks about ladies and gentlemen passing...if they hurt or annoy anyone, their object is attained’. The author of this complaint, written to the local newspaper, wished to ‘strongly advise the parents of these young people to call in [...] unexpectedly, and see for themselves the unpleasant and utterly silly conduct of these individuals’. In this instance adult visitors referred the matter to the park authorities, such as in Saltwell Park, or attempted to call it to the attention of the children’s parents, as in the case at Greenhead Park. The author of the newspaper correspondence refers to himself as ‘Pro Bono Publico’. This suggests that he may have considered his letter writing an act of civic duty rather than of annoyance. He almost certainly implies that the parents should be doing a better job of regulating their children’s behaviour, yet his public letter, written for the public good, also demonstrates that the surveillance, supervision and regulation of children was the duty of all adult citizens.

Parents and other adults could undertake this surveillance facilitated by the design of the park. Benches, often placed to take advantage of particular views, also afforded the viewer a position from which to observe children at play. While this would not assist in the surveillance of children moving through the park, many areas where children played could be observed from one or more benches. The placement of benches and shelter in the lake area in Whitworth Park was particularly efficient in providing good lines of vision for the supervision of children.

127 ‘Evenings in Greenhead Park’ Huddersfield Chronicle, 13 July 1894, p. 3.
128 ‘Evenings in Greenhead Park’ Huddersfield Chronicle, 13 July 1894, p. 3.
129 ‘Evenings in Greenhead Park’ Huddersfield Chronicle, 13 July 1894, p. 3.
The image above (figure 4.27) shows the pavilion at the lake edge. The 360 degree views through the windows, provided adults with a warm and dry viewing space from which to watch children playing by the lake, the bandstand, or on the mound. The benches on the outside of the pavilion, as well as along the side of the lake offered a variety of angles which could facilitate the observance of children. Below the images of the viewing area on top of the hill in Roundwood Park demonstrate a similar facility. Figure 4.28 shows the bandstand on the top of the hill with park benches immediately surrounding it and with others, on the left and right facing away from the bandstand and down into the park. One particular view from this area is shown in figure 4.29. The view was of course considered worthy of the postcard, yet the ability to see far throughout the park made the benches a positive vantage point for adults supervising children. It is perhaps then no coincidence that the Park Keeper of Roundwood Park is shown in figure 4.28 at a place which offers the potential to survey a large part of the park.
Figure 4.28: (Not Attributed), The Bandstand, Roundwood Park (1916) Postcard. Brent Council Image and Photograph Collection.

Figure 4.29: (Not Attributed) View From the Bandstand, Roundwood Park (1905) Postcard. Brent Council Image and Photograph Collection.
In reaction to the potential for surveillance offered in parts of the park, children may have been encouraged to seek out play spaces which could not be so easily overlooked. Greenhead Park Belvedere (the Italian style terrace at the highest point in the park) provided benches offering views across the majority of the park and proved popular for children to play on. A letter to the Huddersfield Examiner in 1920 recalls being a child playing in this area. The writer describes playing on all parts of the terrace, including the ‘rough rocks behind’. These rough rocks offered an alternative space for play to the wide terracing and open areas on the belvedere, one of the attractions undoubtedly being its inhospitable nature and the fact that it was out of eyesight from the benches on the terrace. Likewise images of Whitworth Park show that the southern point of the lake was far less overlooked by benches and the pavilion. While postcards from the period tended to focus on the children playing close to the pavilion, images from outside the period show children engaged in play in this alternative space. In figure 4.30 from 1935 boys play at the lake edge which had been made more visible due to the islands being removed. The earlier image (figure 4.31), which was taken before the islands were removed in 1923, focuses on two girls in the foreground and a number of young boys with boats to the right of the middle of the shot. In the background however are a number of children, probably older boys, who are partially obscured from eyesight by the islands and fountain. This space may have allowed children to escape some of the adult surveillance they were subject to in the park.

[130 Griffiths, p. 15.]
Figure 4.30: (Not Attributed), *Boys Playing at Far End of Whitworth Park Lake* (1935). Photograph. Manchester Local Image Collection.

Figure 4.31: (Not Attributed), *Islands and Fountain, Whitworth Park* (1923). Photograph. Manchester Local Image Collection.
4.4.3 Child/Peer Supervision

Manchester Parks Committee seemed to have a policy of summoning children to the committee meetings in order to receive a telling off. In 1894 three boys were summoned along with their parents to answer for stealing flowers in Philip’s Park. 131 Two of the boys’ parents turned up without their son and were asked to return with their child, while the third father who attended along with his son was made to bear witness to his admonishment. In 1897 two boys, once again accompanied by their parents appeared to receive a telling off for the stealing of birds eggs from nests in Philip’s Park Cemetery. 132 The committee recorded that ‘a sincere expression of regret was offered by the youths and by their parents’. The parents in these cases, not having been in the park were made to witness their children’s punishment and in one case to offer repentance along with them. Parents were deemed responsible for their children’s behaviour whether they themselves were present or not. In 1898 a child was injured while in the swings area of Alexandra Park, Manchester. The twenty-eight year old woman in charge of the child stated that ‘the child was in her arms walking amongst the swings’ when it was hit on the head by a swing, the injury was almost certainly permanent. 133 This tragedy became the subject of a Parks Committee report which demonstrated their unwillingness to take the blame for the event.

Occasions when parents did not accompany children into the park were frequent, particularly for working-class children. The demands of work meant that older children often took on responsibility for childcare in the family. In these cases, children were often accompanied into the park by other children, sometimes not much older than themselves. Children could also visit the park after school finished at 5pm each day, once again meaning that the only direct supervision they received was from their peers. Little Tommy’s trip to the park with his younger sisters, mentioned already in this chapter, is one example of how children designed their own play around their duties of care and responsibility. Ensuring that younger children stayed close by while older children played could be done by leaving them in a pram, as in little Tommy’s case and perhaps would have been the same for the girl

131 GML-GB127-256, 17 August 1894, p. 212.
132 GML-GB127-258, 4 June 1897, p. 142.
133 GML-GB127-259, 15 July 1898.
in figure 4.32, pictured outside of Saltwell Park gates with two younger siblings. Children also played directly with their wards, although bye-law restrictions on boys and girls playgrounds meant that this was only feasible when siblings were of the same gender. A tragedy occurred in 1894 in Manchester’s Gaskell’s Recreation Ground, when a three year old girl fell off the swing she had been standing on as she was pushed by her eight year old sister who was responsible for her. In this instance there was no inference of blame on the child supervisor for the accident, and no comment on the unsuitability of a child of eight to be in charge of another child in the park. The Parks Committee responded to this tragedy by printing notices warning against children standing on swings which were posted in all of the parks and open spaces in the town. Unlike the accident above involving a grown up, the Parks Committee showed a willingness to take partial responsibility for the event, even when it was unlikely that it could have been prevented by the park keeper or other member of staff. This perhaps underlines the way children’s health was deemed the responsibility of the civic authorities and the nation.

![Figure 4.32: (Not Attributed) West Entrance to Saltwell Park (Unknown). Postcard. Gateshead Local Studies.](image)

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134 GML-GB127-256, 17 August 1994, p. 211.
This paternalistic attitude towards visitors may have encouraged the notion of the park as a safe-haven in which to play and helped children to view the park keeper as a figure to be trusted. A request for a clock to be placed in the lodge house’s window of Birch Field Park in order to save children having to search out the park keeper, suggests that it was to the keeper that children would turn for information. Thomas Morgans’s recollections of childhood in Thea Thompson’s book Edwardian Childhoods, recalls falling out of a swing he had been placed in by his older sister when she went off to play, and it being the Park Keeper who picked him up and found his sister to take care of him. Vivian Hirst’s autobiography of growing up near Greenhead Park around 1910 recalled the keeper there parading ‘up and down, nodding to the nurses and making friends with the children’. She went on to state that the children in the park ‘looked on him as a friend we had always known’. Restricted access to the park and the architectural design of the park entrance encouraged children to regulate their own behaviour, and it is almost inevitable that many misdemeanours did not occur because a child wanted to behave appropriately and avoid the wrath of the Park Keeper who was a trusted friend and ally. A sense of what was correct, respectable and suitable behaviour for a park would have been assimilated by children who accessed the parks, both from being told expressly by parents, and other adults, by the impression of the architecture, and by watching adults and other children at play and the respect they afforded the authorities present in the park.

This latter reason may have been strongest of all as children attempted to emulate their peers. While children undoubtedly created their own rules and regulations through their interactions with one another, they would have referenced adult norms of behaviour in doing so. Children unwilling to ‘play nice’, ‘play for fair’, or children who in other ways did not conform to expected gender, class or age rules could be shunned from games and ostracised. Child-imposed supervision and regulation acted as a powerful force on influencing the behaviour of children at play, perhaps unexpectedly encouraging the adherence to park rules, both written and unwritten. This child-imposed system of governance worked to the contrary also and children could often spur each other on to

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135 GML-GB127-2510, 30 May 1899.
137 Griffiths, p. 24.
break rules imposed on them by adults. While park keepers could be viewed as figures of trust and kindly authority, the role could make him the focus of attempts to rail against the surveillance, and regulation of children in the park. In Alexandra Park, Manchester in 1894, a large group of children aimed to do just this. The Parks Committee received a report that ‘when the bell rings at night for clearing out, instead of leaving the Park quietly, these youths, to the number of about a hundred and fifty make a rush for the swings, refusing to leave, and defying the Park Keepers to turn them out’. The sheer number of children engaged in this activity sought to make a mockery of the park keepers’ attempts to turn them out of the park. Given that controlling access was one of the most powerful tools of the keeper, this was cleverly aimed to threaten the very notion of an effective surveillance, supervision and control over children’s play. The decision was taken to engage the police to arrest a number of the children in order to impose order, yet in having to defer to an outside authority, the park’s committee showed how effective children’s play could be in undermining adult authority.

4.5 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been to investigate play in the park, focusing specifically on the way park designers engaged with notions of appropriate play, the acts of play children took part in and the attempts to survey, regulate and control these acts. In doing so the aim has been to investigate the way in which the material conditions of the park, as well as the hierarchical structures of authority, reflect the culture of childhood created by adults for children at the time. The acts of play children engaged in navigated these conditions and structures and so reflect attempts to assimilate as well as reject the imposition of this culture. Section 4.2 demonstrated how the public park could make materially manifest a range of ideological understandings of children’s play. The links between play, athleticism, fresh air and health were significant in creating designs which facilitated ‘good’ play which aimed to have a positive effect on the future physique of the nation. The reasons behind this will be looked at more closely in the following chapter. The park designers attempted to

139 GML-GB127-2S6, 6 July 1894, pp.181-82.
create segregated spaces for play to occur, and where athletic pursuits could be catered for elsewhere, they focused instead on more sedate, individual modes of play. Underlying the creation of these spaces was an understanding that the performance of ‘good’ play could only be realised with the provision of surveillance and supervision, again made materially possible through the park design.

Section 4.3 focused on the play which took place in the park. This play involved a considerable interaction with the materiality of the park, both in the built structures and in the natural elements. The presence of toy objects in the material record of Whitworth Park enabled a discussion of the ways in which children participated in a consumerist rendering of childhood. Of equal importance were the repurposed items excavated and the untraceable forms of play which highlighted the significance of imagination in the experience of the play landscape. Often play could be seen as a considered response to the culture of the park and beyond. Section 4.4 discussed the structures of authority and supervision in place to morally police the park landscape, along with the tools used to facilitate this role. Surveillance, supervision and regulation of children at play in the park came from three main categories; the park keeper and his staff, parents and other adults, and children both individually and in groups. While all acted within the park, there was a clearly defined hierarchy of control with the park keeper, and the parks sub-committee he answered to, at the top, parents below this and children at the bottom. This did not mean that children were powerless to resist the authority in the park, rather it was demonstrated how their relatively lowly position encouraged them to engage in a complex relationship with the park structures. The park keeper, as an embodiment of the park itself, was on the one hand a figure of comfort, security and friendship, while on the other a representative of a heavy-handed and unwanted authority.

Overall this chapter has dealt with a notion of play as a morally significant set of actions, informed by an idealistic rendering of the culture of childhood. ‘Correct’ forms of play could ensure a positive future not just for children, but for the nation as a whole. This ‘correct’ play however was deemed under threat both from external influences of society and from children’s own attempts to sabotage and subvert these actions to take on other meanings. The public park represented a space for this negotiation to take place, a space
where children had to navigate the material conditions and the structures of power in order to play.
British imperialism played a significant part in shaping the experience of childhood in the late-Victorian and Edwardian era. This was not only true of those children, migrant and indigenous living in British colonies, but also those living in Britain. As Gilbert and Driver put it, empire did not just happen ‘over there’ but was experienced ‘in the minds and practices of people within Europe [...] in what they wrote, read and imagined [...] the clothes they wore [...] the commodities they bought and sold [...] the places they inhabited’.¹ For children growing up in Britain in this era, the reality of the empire was etched into the landscapes they occupied throughout the day, into the books they read, the games they played, and toys they played with. Many children were also the target of adult-led social reform projects, conducted in imperialist language, with imperialistic aims.² The fears and anxieties of social conflict, economic decline and international competition, translated into attempts to secure the future of Britain by ‘incorporating working-class youth into the imperial enterprise’.³ The public park was a particularly significant space in the day-to-day childhood experience of empire in Britain. The 'age of empire' coincided with the most prolific period of park building the country has ever witnessed.⁴ This sudden growth of public parks was a response to, amongst other things, fears over Britain's fragility as an imperial nation and a perceived degeneration of the population.⁵ Colley has stated how this sense of fragility, caused in part by the growing rivalry within Europe that flourished in the latter part of the century, led to Empire dominating Britain’s national self-image.⁶ Parks were created in this image, filled with plants and architecture that told of conquest and exploration in far-flung places. They served as a space in which reformers and town leaders could express a strengthened British identity, civic, national and imperial. Parks were places for adults to actively control children’s engagement with nation and empire, through special events such as coronations and royal visits. They also provided space for scouting and

⁴ Jordan, p. 85.
sporting activities, which were at their heart physical and ‘character training’ for the future generation of imperial leaders.\(^7\)

The British Empire has long been a significant area of study for historians of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. However, the insights of postcolonial theorists, heavily critical of existing imperial histories during the 1980s and 90s, led to a period of relative decline in this area.\(^8\) Even when writing the histories of former colonies many historians seemed to view imperialism as something of a side issue, preferring to focus on a national level at the expense of the international.\(^9\) More recently interest in the British World has been rejuvenated with work looking at the way imperial culture and ideas flowed throughout the Empire.\(^10\) The success of these works seemed to set out a case for British imperial history to begin in the former colonies, rather than in Britain. As historian Andrew S. Thompson suggested, this was perhaps the Empire striking back.\(^11\) Indeed Thompson’s work was one of the first to reconsider the way in which empire affected day-to-day life in Britain, with the notable exception of fellow historian John MacKenzie’s work on propaganda.\(^12\) Recently this approach has gathered pace with historians seeking to direct attention towards the ways in which ‘imperialism shaped the discursive and cultural history of the colonizer as well as the colonized’.\(^13\) This has led to what Kathleen Wilson called in 2004 a new imperial history, described further by Gary McCulloch as ‘actively conscious of the relationship between the British Empire and Britain’s own national identity’.\(^14\)

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\(^8\) Saul Dubow, ‘How British Was the British World? The Case of South Africa’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37 (1) (2009), 1-27.

\(^9\) Dubow, p. 1.


Furthermore, in the ‘Age of Empire’ nationalism and imperialism were deeply intertwined. Steve Attridge states that ‘nationalism emanates from a sense of belonging to a common race, language and history, invariably defined by territory’. In 1914, Britain’s territory encompassed 11 million square miles and could call some 400 million people subjects. To envisage Britain without her Empire was inconceivable. Likewise a definition of imperialism that does not mention national identity seems to be lacking. James Ryan’s work on photography and propaganda, building on the work of MacKenzie before him, describes imperialism as ‘a pervasive and persistent set of cultural attitudes towards the rest of the world, informed to varying degrees by militarism, patriotism, a belief in racial superiority and loyalty to a “civilizing mission”’. This is not to argue that living in Britain during this era involved jingoistic self-aware declarations of this sort. As Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose argue, ‘the culture of Britain...was permeated with empire.’ Using a discursive analysis they argue that empire was an everyday practice for people ‘not in the sense of political affiliations for or against empire, but simply assuming it was there, part of the given world that had made them who they were’. Part of this everyday understanding of nationalism and imperialism was the adherence to colonial notions of superiority over other nations and other races: understanding what it was to be British was linked to the definition of a colonial ‘other’. Again the day-to-day experience of colonial attitudes was not explicit declarations of racial superiority, but rather in knowing that to be British was to hold a position of dominance over others. Colonialism must not be confused with imperialism, although the notions frequently overlap. Colonialism in this era also engaged with the idea of transporting British citizens to live in and occupy territory overseas. When children were referred to as future citizens of the empire, and future leaders, this was not only relating to potential positions of power they may hold, but rather their potential role as colonial settlers. In this way children from the working classes, as well as the middle and upper

16 Stockwell, p. 1.
18 Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, ‘Introduction: being at home with the Empire’ in At Home With The Empire: Metropolitan Culture and The Imperial World ed. by Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 3.
19 Hall and Rose, p. 3.
classes who were more likely to assume a position of imperial authority later in life, were also linked into the British Empire project.

While historic research on the impact of imperialism on the day-to-day life of people living in Britain is growing, little has been done on the impact it had on children. This is a significant omission given the major role children were thought to have as future citizens at the time. This role will be discussed at length in the next section. One significant contribution to the discourse on the way in which children were conceived under British imperialism is Swain and Hillel’s work *Child, Nation, Race and Empire.* 20 Focusing on child rescue this work highlights how children were transformed from being little more than property to potential citizens by the end of the century. 21 While offering insights into this renegotiation of imperial childhood identity, this work is not concerned with the day-to-day lived experience of the majority of children in Britain. The same can be argued of Boone’s pioneering work on the *Youth of Darkest England*, which highlights the way in which working-class children (specifically boys) were the subject of idealistic and imperially-minded projects from middle-class reformers. Boone acknowledges the potential for resistance on behalf of the children yet given his focus on the rhetoric of these projects by the likes of Baden-Powell, Mayhew and Booth, his work ultimately reveals more about adult concerns than childhood experience. It is in the field of literary theory that much of the work regarding children in the context of British imperialism has been done. M. Daphne Kutzer’s book *Empire’s Children* is perhaps the most significant of these, situating British children’s texts within the wider cultural context, revealing some of the ways in which empire imbued children’s culture at the time. 22 Readdressing the gender imbalance seen in some of the historical work, Smith’s work *Empire in British Girls’ Literature and Culture* discusses the construction of a feminised imperial conception of girlhood as future mothers, nurses and civilisers of the future. 23 More recently Shirleene Robinson and Simon Sleight have produced an edited volume which represents a significant contribution to the

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20 Swain and Hillel, see above for reference.
21 Swain and Hillel, pp. 1-15.
investigation of the role of empire in the experience of childhood and youth. The contributors to *Children, Childhood and Youth in the British World* acknowledge children’s agency over their own lives, and so seek to draw out the way children engaged with and negotiated empire in their day-to-day lives throughout the British World. My own contribution to the above book is expanded on and developed here and as such represents an original attempt to demonstrate the significance of the park landscape in discourses of childhood and empire.

This chapter continues the work begun in the field of ‘new imperial history’ focusing on imperialism and nationalism as intertwined conceptions that permeated the everyday life and culture of childhood. While focusing on the public park, I also draw on aspects of children’s material culture outside of this space. In doing so I intend to demonstrate how imperialism was a set of practices, and how meanings were created through interaction with the park landscape in collaboration with other elements of material culture. This will be revealed through an investigation of the architecture and planting of the park as well as looking at specific events and activities which took place in the space. It will address how the public park was a space for children to be exposed to, learn about and become inculcated with ideas of nationalism, imperialism, patriotism and citizenship. It will also argue that the park was a site where the notion that children were ‘little savages’ who required civilizing was expressed and negotiated. Furthermore, children were not merely passive recipients of instruction relating to their place in the world as British citizens of the future, but were actively involved in the negotiation of national, imperial and colonial identities through their actions in the park. Using the park landscape imaginatively through playing games of war and exploration and make-belief, children embodied and explored themes of empire and their roles within it and sometimes challenged them through non-normative modes of play. Focusing on Greenhead Park as the key case study for this chapter, the investigation will follow closely the landscape as it was then set out, using maps and images of the park in order to explore key themes, features and spaces. Prior to this it is important to discuss in more depth the idealistic role of children within British nationalism.

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25 Ruth Colton, ‘Savage Instincts, Civilizing Spaces: The Child, the Empire and the Public Park, c. 1880-1914’ in *Children, Childhood and Youth in the British World*, pp. 255-270.
and imperialism. A consideration of the design and particular features of Greenhead Park will be followed by a discussion and analysis of children’s acts of play within the park.

5.1 Historical Background

The economic depression in Britain, coupled with the disastrous military campaign against the Zulu people in 1879, followed immediately afterwards by the First Boer War of 1880 to 1881, de-stabilised views of Britain as a dominant colonial power. Indeed A. E. Musson argues that pessimism during the depression far exceeded the actual impact on the economy, wages and standard of living. 26 The translated version of Max Nordau’s sensationalist book Degeneration (1892) was greeted with mixed reviews in Britain but it served to spark a nationwide discussion of degeneracy in the British people, a topic which had been around in some form or another since the publication of Darwin’s On the Origin of Species in 1859. 27 Throughout the century a number of biologists had rejected Darwin’s idea that evolution was by nature progressive, and claimed that it would be equally possible to devolve. Indeed prior to Darwin’s work, Blumenbach had stated that all men were descended from white Caucasian man and that they had devolved into other inferior or degenerate races. 28 Degeneration was posited in racial terms but also by class. French psychologist and leading scholar on degeneration, Bénédict Morel, claimed for example that alcohol and drug use, economic poverty and environmental factors, played a role in bringing about mental deterioration. 29 The public park, as a site for sober, rational activity and exercise and contemplation of beauty, gained popularity as a solution to the problem of British working-class degeneracy. The middle-class reformers who had previously championed change within a stable class system, now sought to make the working classes

more like themselves. The idea of the park as a social space for mixing classes and to assist the working classes in emulating their superiors had been cited as early as 1833, yet the demands of the time and the fears over the existence of a ‘dark continent’ within the country, now gave this belief more credence. The mid-century idea of the natural subordination of the working classes, which had an evolutionary slant, was now bypassed by a more pressing concern for the health and prosperity of the entire nation and the realisation or acceptance that the future domination and economic supremacy of the British race was reliant on the evolution, rather than devolution of all classes.

As the future citizens of the empire, children were especially relevant to this model. From the mid-nineteenth century and the emergence of evolutionary psychology, both children and ‘savages’ were said to possess an immature mind. Many anthropologists used children in analogy with primitive cultures and many psychologists looked to animals to explain childhood behaviour. Medical practitioner Crichton Browne warned parents in 1883 that ‘children are not little nineteenth-century men and women, but diamond editions of very remote ancestors, full of savage whims and impulses’. Up until the fin de siècle, this evolutionary immaturity of children was regarded as a mark of their inferiority, something to be tackled with religious stricture, discipline and hard work. The crises of the 1880s however, led to an increasing awareness of the generation who would lead or fight for the Empire in the future. The child acted as a ‘key to self-understanding, to a realm of a lost past, and also the guarantee of a more positive future’. In order to ensure the future of the Empire, the child must be protected from the dangers associated with growing up too quickly, a return to Rousseau’s idea that ‘nature wants children to be children before being men’. Influential educational psychologist Stanley Hall also wrote of the ‘omnipresent dangers of precocity’ present in ‘our urbanised hothouse life’. Childhood is therefore once again linked to the

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32 Shuttleworth, p. 39.
34 Shuttleworth, p.27
Romantic notion of the child outdoors, learning from nature. This notion was taken a step further by Margaret and Rachel McMillan who in 1908 set up an open air ‘camp’ school in Deptford, south-east London. The school and the nursery that followed it aimed to place urban working-class children in a natural environment in order to learn, a theory which remained influential for much of the twentieth century. From the mid-nineteenth century, however, the park provided a natural environment in the urban landscape, which contained large open green spaces along with hothouses by way of contrast, and visits to both were believed to be essential for proper childhood development. This natural educational space became all the more important as the figure of the child came to embody the future of the nation. As Alexander Chamberlain, who was a close follower of Hall, wrote in 1900, ‘the child [...] in his atavisms and his prophecies, in his brutish and in his divine characteristics, is the evolutionary being of our species [...] in a sense, he is all’.  

This symbolism of the child as being akin to the primitive also worked the other way to justify the colonial system of rule. The Victoria Memorial designed by Sir Thomas Brock was unveiled in 1911 as part of a wider memorial complex at the centre of London. On the edges of the memorial complex are a series of gates representing Australia, Canada, South Africa and West Africa. The gates depict children, accompanied in turn by a ram and kangaroo (Australia), a seal and fish (Canada), an ostrich and monkey (South Africa) and a cheetah (West Africa). Simon Sleight and Shirleene Robinson have noted how this memorial articulates the way in which the British Empire was imaginatively constructed, with the colonial nations ‘forever petrified as children’, the animals serving to ‘emphasize the apparent rawness of the imperial offspring’. At the heart of this image was Queen Victoria, providing patronage to those who were as yet unable to govern themselves in part due to their youthfulness. Trollope articulated this view of what has been called ‘the white man’s burden’ in his work *Australia and New Zealand* (1873):

> If we keep them (the colonies), we should keep them - not because they add prestige to the name of Great Britain, not because they are gems in our diadem, not in order that we may boast that the sun never

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sets on our dependencies, but because by keeping them we may assist them in developing their own resources.  

The colonies are constructed ideologically as children, to be guided in their education until the time came that they might be able to rule themselves, and presumably continue to support Mother England economically.

At the heart of the Victoria Memorial sat the figure of Queen Victoria, surrounded by images of Motherhood, Justice and Truth. The inclusion of the scene of Motherhood alluded to Victoria’s alleged ‘great love for her people’. It also served to illustrate the way in which the Empire was constructed idealistically as a family, with the Queen as the maternal ruler, and the colonies as her children. Anna Davin draws attention to the ideological importance of motherhood in the imperial project. She argues that child-rearing took on a ‘national importance’ with calls for women to populate the world as a way of ensuring British dominance, not just over colonies but also over other competing Empires such as the United States and Germany. In order to fulfil their ‘duty and destiny’ girls and young women had to be instructed in how to best become ‘mothers of the race’. Schoolgirls began receiving lessons in ‘cooking, hygiene and child-care’ in order to prepare for their role as ‘mothers of the next generation’. In the imperial family, girls took on this role while boys were the future citizens, soldiers, and colonisers of the empire. The idea of childhood was therefore extremely important to the discussion of empire in this era. The figure of the child was a potent symbol for Britain’s continued dominance in the world, as citizens, soldiers, leaders, and settlers. Correct development and education would ensure Britain’s future, yet this was under threat from the contemporary issues of ill-health, sanitation and vice. The child also acted as a symbol for the colonial ‘other’, the non-civilised savage who threatened stability at home and abroad, and who had to be educated, civilised and dominated. The next section will now explore how these ideas were articulated in the public park design.

5.2 Nation and Empire in Park Design

Having looked at the way in which ideas of nation and empire underpinned thinking about childhood in the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras, I will now investigate the way in which these themes influenced the design and creation of public parks. Greenhead Park in Huddersfield will form a particular case study for this section. The majority of academic literature on imperial spaces in Britain has focused on London, although Joanna Brück’s archaeological investigation of park landscapes in Ireland is a welcome corrective to this.\(^\text{45}\) It is demonstrated throughout this chapter, through the use of Greenhead Park, that provincial towns also engaged materially with messages of nationalism and imperialism in a unique way. Children were a significant part of the rationale behind park building, and indeed their role as future citizens heavily influenced thinking about nation and empire at the time. Nevertheless, contemporary Victorian and Edwardian authors writing about the design of public parks were often less explicit over the influence of imperialism in parks and children were rarely mentioned in this context, especially when compared to discussions of nature and play. Despite this, imperialism and nationalism underpin numerous elements of park design as this section will demonstrate, and this impacted significantly on the experience of the child in the public park. Experience of imperialism was not limited to children at this time of course, but was rather a thread running through everyday life for everyone living in Britain. Imperialism and nationalism were both explicit and implicit in the architecture and landscape of the park for those who visited. This will be addressed here, but special attention will be given to the impact these forms of design might have had on children. I will provide a brief background to the history of Greenhead Park before moving on to discuss specific aspects of the architecture at length.

5.2.1 Greenhead Park

Huddersfield town was incorporated in 1868, rather later than many of the industrial towns in the area, such as Bradford, Halifax and Oldham, incorporated in 1847, 1848 and 1849 respectively.\(^{46}\) This was at least in part to do with the fact that large swathes of the town were part of the Ramsden family estate. The Lord of the Manor was in charge of approving all officials of public service, effectively ensuring that the Ramsden family held significant political power within the town as well as being the largest landowner and landlord in the district.\(^{47}\) It was not until 1848 with the Huddersfield Improvement Act that this power was undermined by the creation of 21 Improvement Commissioners, only three of which were to be chosen by Ramsden.\(^{48}\) This change came about due to dissatisfaction with the town’s governance and a number of civic improvements being made in nearby towns. In practice the Ramsden Estate retained significant control over the town and its rapidly growing suburbs. The tension between the family and the growing, civic-minded middle class of Huddersfield who sought to institutionalise their unique set of values within the infrastructure, systems of governance and built environment of the town, was expressed clearly in the creation of Greenhead Park.\(^{49}\) Indeed it took twelve years of negotiation, from 1869 to 1881, between the newly formed Corporation of Huddersfield and Sir John Ramsden to agree terms regarding the area of land which was to become the Park. Negotiations to purchase the necessary land to build a public park started between the Corporation and the Ramsden Estate as early as 1869.\(^{50}\) From 1870, thanks to the efforts of Liberal Alderman Thomas Denham, the people of Huddersfield were able to enjoy access to about 15 acres of parkland, which he had personally leased from the Ramsden Estate.\(^{51}\) This early park hosted band concerts, flower shows and galas, although animals continued to graze the areas people visited.\(^{52}\) In 1880 the Huddersfield Corporation finally took

\(^{46}\) Griffiths, p. 5.
\(^{48}\) Marland, p. 19.
\(^{50}\) Griffiths, p. 6.
\(^{51}\) ‘Mr Alderman Denham on the Public Park Question’, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 28 May 1870, p. 8.
ownership of 30 acres of land from Ramsden and Greenhead Park was formally opened with
great pomp and ceremony on 27 September 1884.

Planning of the park was placed in the hands of the Borough Surveyor, Richard
Dugdale, who took responsibility for every aspect of the design. For the most part he used
local contractors to produce the structures for the park, which he designed himself.\textsuperscript{53} By the
time of the official opening many of the main features were ready including the Gothic
entrance lodge, Italian gardens and fountain, the belvedere and terraces, the main lake and
the octagonal bandstand (see Figure 5.1). Four other lakes were added not long after, along
with lakeside arbours in varying styles. Being smaller than originally envisaged, the Park did
not incorporate all of Denham’s ideas for the Park, such as a public baths, cricket ground,
gymnasium, and trade museum.\textsuperscript{54} The Park was nonetheless very much an expression of
local issues and of Denham’s own conception of park landscapes. A Temperance Movement
drinking fountain was donated, as was the ‘Rebecca at her Well’ water feature donated by
the Band of Hope Union in 1885, reflecting Denham’s involvement in the local Temperance
Movement.\textsuperscript{55} Local printer Alfred Jubb donated the gate at the Glenholt entrance, known as
the ‘printer’s gate’ emphasizing the significance of local trade and industry, which would
have been expressed in the ambitious trade museum had it been built.\textsuperscript{56} The inter-war
period saw the park extended to its present size with the addition of two bowling greens,
fourteen tennis courts, two putting greens and a pavilion housing a cafe and changing
rooms, offering physical activity. Important later additions included the Boer War Memorial,
unveiled in 1905, and the Great War Memorial in 1924, both commemorating local soldiers.
The conservatory formed part of the original plans for the park, but was not realised until
August 1930, and was situated on land formally comprising one of the small fish ponds.
Filled with exotic and economically important plants like tea, this offered the horticultural
and economic education that Denham had been so keen on in his original plan.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{53} ‘Makers of Greenhead Park’ at http://www.friendsofgreenheadpark.org.uk/wp-
\textsuperscript{54} ‘Mr Alderman Denham on the Public Park Question’, Huddersfield Chronicle, 28 May 1870, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{55} Griffiths, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{56} Griffiths, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{57} Griffiths, pp. 44-45.
Figure 5.1: OS Map, Greenhead Park (1910). Detail from 1910 OS Map. Digimap
5.2.2. The Park Entrance

**Figure 5.2: (Steve Challenger) Greenhead Park Gates.** (2012). Photograph. Copyright Steve Challenger. Gateposts showing acanthus leaf design under pyramidal tops. Lodge house in background with coat of arms just visible on gable end.

The main entrance to the Park set the tone for the space inside. At Greenhead Park, large and elaborate wrought iron gates were flanked by tall stone pillars (see figure 5.2). These pillars were decorated with a number of floral motifs including acanthus leaves supporting the pyramidal pillar tops. The acanthus leaf was an extremely popular symbol in Victorian architecture and decoration, referencing the extensive use of this Mediterranean plant in
Classical architecture.\textsuperscript{58} The use of such design choices was value-laden, presenting the town, city, nation and empire as ‘a spiritual legacy from the ancient world, and stressing the inheritance of that civilisation’\textsuperscript{59} A second reference point lay in the medieval use of the plant in decorating religious manuscripts. The religious connotations of this were reinforced further by the gothic lodge house immediately inside the gates, which served as housing for the superintendent and as a meeting place for the Parks Committee.\textsuperscript{60} Gothic style is frequently linked to the building of churches during the Victorian period, yet for children entering Greenhead Park, they may have also made the link between the lodge house and their schools.

\textbf{Figure 5.3:} Edward Hughes, \textit{Huddersfield School Board’s Spring Grove School} (1878).
Photolithograph. Kirklees Image Archive.

\textsuperscript{58} German architect Constantine Uhde for example dedicated two essays to the use of the acanthus leaf in classical and byzantine architecture which appeared in the American Art Journal \textit{The Workshop} 4 (1871), numbers 6 and 12 respectively.

\textsuperscript{59} K. Hill, “‘Thoroughly Imbued with the Spirit of Ancient Greece”: Symbolism And Space In Victorian Civic Culture” in \textit{Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle Class Identity in Britain 1800–1940}, ed. by A. Kidd and D. Nicholls (Manchester,1999), 99-111 (pp.99-100).

\textsuperscript{60} Griffiths, p. 13.
The 1870 Education Act led to the opening of hundreds of local authority board schools, like Huddersfield’s Spring Grove, which opened in 1878 on land purchased from the Ramsden Estate (see figure 5.3). Architect Edward Hughes incorporated the gothic style in his design of the school. The windows at the side of the building in particular evoke church windows, while the building layout itself echoed the cruciform shape of ecclesiastical buildings. Both school and lodge house utilise similar architectural forms, such as dormer windows and pointed spires on gable ends as well as the tall, thin windows, albeit on a vastly different scale. The park entrance sets up a narrative of Christian nationalism and imperialism, which is expressed in the landscape beyond the gates. For children, this is accessed first and foremost in the visual link between school and park architecture. The park as a site for education is therefore also made explicit.

The Huddersfield coat of arms was clearly visible on the lodge house (as well as on park benches throughout the park). It depicted a number of rams, topped by a ram’s head, in part derived from the coat of arms of the Ramsden family (see figure 5.4). This can be seen to emphasise both the importance of the town’s textile industry and the role of the largest land owner in the town’s history. The prominent placement of the coat of arms ensured that recognition was given to the Ramsden family as patrons of the Park and civic leaders of Huddersfield. As discussed above, tensions between the Ramsden family and the civic authorities were clearly articulated through the negotiations surrounding the creation of Greenhead Park. The ubiquity of the coat of arms, reinforcing Ramsden’s importance within the town may have gone some way towards placating him. The placement of the coat of arms prominently on the lodge house at the park entrance was of course deliberate. This building housed those acting on behalf of the civic authorities in regulating the behaviour of those within the park. The symbol was not only a stamp of authority for those within, but also a statement about the idealistic role of the civic body, controlling the behaviour and morality of those who lived within its jurisdiction. Children were not exempt from reading and understanding this message of ‘rational, self improving and public-spirited’ citizenship.61

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61 Stobart, pp. 486-487.
Figure 5.4: William Sykes, *Huddersfield Corporation Coat of Arms* (1915). Pen and Ink. Kirklees Image Archive. The Latin inscription reads ‘God helps the diligent’.

Historian Stephen Heathorn argues that during the 1880s there was a shift in the elementary education curriculum in Britain, away from a focus on ‘simple rote learning of the “three R’s”, rigorous classroom discipline’, and the learning of ‘habits of obedience, thrift and deference’.  

62 Instead the focus lay in teaching ‘economic efficiency and manual training...commercial and technological progress, and a humanities curriculum centred on the development of patriotism, civic ideals and basic knowledge about the nation and empire’.  

63 This educational emphasis highlights how significant civic identity was deemed to be for children, and furthermore how civic identity was wrapped up in a larger conception of the nation and of the empire. Academic and education reformist Oscar Browning wrote

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63 Heathorn, p. 396.
that ‘every Englishman is a citizen in several different ways. He is a citizen of the town [...] to which he belongs: he is a citizen of England [...] he is a citizen of the United Kingdom, and he is also a citizen of the great British Empire.’  

Economy, industry and commerce were deemed to be at the heart of this teaching in keeping with the ideas that children were the future citizens, soldiers and workers of the empire. The repeated use of the Huddersfield coat of arms in Greenhead Park, with its implicit reference to the textile industry, served not only to evoke citizenship of the town within the mind of the schoolchild, but also of the nation and empire. In this way the park design reinforced the lessons children learnt outside the gates. In echoing the architecture of church and of schools, as well as the overt use of civic symbols, the park landscape was designed to be read within a narrative of nation and empire, British heritage and a Christian national identity.

5.2.3 Statuary

Once inside the park gates the main boulevard, slightly inclining, lay straight ahead towards the terraces and belvedere at the highest point of the landscape. Paths leading away to the right and to the left were outlined by formal bedding areas. On the right hand side and clearly visible from the gateway was the Boer War memorial, erected in 1905. This was a tall, wide plinth, topped by a figure of an infantry man in uniform and dedicated to the ‘Fallen Heroes’ of Huddersfield (see figure 5.5). The memorial was funded by donations from the public and was opened with much spectacle by Lieutenant General Sir John French KCB KCMG. A well-known Boer War hero he was idolised by the public, appearing on commemorative tea cups, plates, ceramic figurines, patriotic flags, matchbooks, badges and souvenir postcards, as well as being featured in countless newspapers, magazines and books, for example in figures 5.6 and 5.7. Out of these commodities, the type perhaps most accessible to children would have been the patriotic badges. The US firm Whitehead and Hoag manufactured countless of these badges for export to Britain. Some had patriotic messages printed on them such as figure 5.8 which states ‘we hold a vaster empire than has

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65 Griffiths, p. 29.
been’ while others depicted the faces of the key leading members of the military involved in the War. Mass produced using a technique involving celluloid and developed in the 1870s, commemorative badges of this sort were first marketed at the British population as part of the Jubilee celebrations in 1897. Available individually or as part of a collection, these badges were cheap, allowing children to collect and display them, thereby engaging materially with this imperialistic war in a location so geographically remote that few of them could hope to visit. The memorial in the park allowed for further material engagement with this conflict, humanising it and providing a fixed point at which to situate it. In this way, a geographically remote imperialistic war could be made local, and situated within the park. The park acted as a place in which Empire was brought home as well as a space to commemorate local participation abroad. The choice of a nationally recognised military person to open the statue, rather than a local dignitary, emphasised further how the sacrifice of Huddersfield men was deemed to be significant on a national level.

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Figure 5.5: (Smith Carter), The ‘Fallen Heroes’ Boer War Memorial, Greenhead Park (1910). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive.

Figure 5.7: (Not Attributed), *General French* (Unknown). Badge produced by Whitehead and Hoag, USA.  
<http://www.bidorbuy.co.za/item/71460861/Boer_War_General_French_Pin_Badge.html>  
[accessed 4/1/2016]

Figure 5.8: Trustees of the British Museum (photography), Collectable Boer War Souvenir Badge (1900). Aluminium and Plastic. The British Museum Collection. Patriotic badge produced by Whitehead and Hoag, USA.
Historian Max Jones sets out the case for a new methodology of investigating heroes stressing the importance of looking at these figures as cultural constructions, not merely as individual personalities; to consider them within the unique cultural context which elevated them to hero status in the first place. 67 The monument in Greenhead Park elevates the ordinary soldier to hero status. Its depiction of a nameless infantryman was similar to nearby examples in Crow Nest Park, Dewsbury (opened in similar style by Major-General Baden-Powell) and Western Park, Sheffield and reveals a culture that sought to stress the significance of the everyman in the imperial enterprise. 68 By naming these men ‘heroes’ rather than just ‘the fallen’ the point was made that participation in imperial warfare was a

68 It is also worth noting that this glorification of the local solider can be read (within a Marxist perspective) as a critique of the class system. As Price argues, the working-class press publicised the hardships which the ordinary ‘Tommy’ faced and was critical of the ruling class of military leaders; See Richard Price, An Imperial War and the British Working Class (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 46. The popularity of military leaders like Lieutenant-General French was undeniable nonetheless.
glorious endeavour. Looking at figure 5.9 it is notable how the face of the memorial echoes the looks of many of the ‘heroes’ depicted on the badges, including Lieutenant General French. The named dead on the plinth included one sergeant, four corporals and 21 privates, the three lowest ranking and enlisted positions in the army, yet the memorial depicts a mature man, much more like the commissioned officers depicted on the badges collected by children. The relatively unknown local soldiers in this way were given a status in death, greater than they achieved in life. Lieutenant General French, as a recognisable national hero acted as the embodiment and the spectacle in the celebration of these figures, a focus for children’s abstract feelings of patriotism. This use of military figures as a vehicle for the expression of an imperial nationalism had its precedent in the Jubilee celebrations of 1897. As part of these celebrations some 50,000 soldiers, sourced from Britain’s disparate colonies marched through London in the presence of the Queen, now designated Empress. Fremont-Barnes has drawn attention to the ways in which this procession mimicked a scene from Imperial Rome, ‘with tributes brought from throughout the Empire, and long processions of foreign soldiers playing the role of the old barbarian contingents [...] of Gaul, Iberia and Britannia’. The spectacle of empire clearly played a key role in the articulation of nationalism as well as civic sentiment. The message remained that the participation of the civic body in war was key to the glory of the Nation.

5.2.4 Architecture and Planting

The gothic lodge house discussed above was not the only aspect of architecture worthy of note. To the left off the main boulevard in Greenhead Park, the path ran down to the perimeter, across a small bridge decorated with planted urns, as shown in figure 5.10. It then passed around a small fish pond towards the fishtail shaped pond and the smallest of the four lakeside arbours. The design of these arbours differed in that two of them, the ones by the lakes in the southernmost part of the park, replicated medieval castles or towers (see figure 5.11), while the two around the larger boating lakes referenced Roman or

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Italianate grottos. The use of classical and medieval architecture, while seemingly very different, were used together, alongside diverse styles of planting to emphasise a sense of national identity in which English pastoralism, Empire and Christianity played significant roles. Varied architectural and planting styles will now be discussed, demonstrating how the park acted as a sort of world in miniature, collapsing geography and time. The park became a site for interaction with the world as made available through imperialism, placing Britain at the heart of this experience.

**Figure 5.10**: (Smith Carter) *Greenhead Park, Huddersfield* (1910). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive.
Figure 5.11: (Unattributed) View Over Ornamental Lake, Greenhead Park (Unknown). Photograph. Kirklees Image Archive. The smallest lakeside grotto in Greenhead Park. The design resembles a medieval tower surrounded to the front by a moat.

The blend of medieval and classical architectures was complimented by the inclusion of both formal and informal planting in the park. The lower lakes area, with its medieval style grottos, represented the less formal more naturalistic part of the park, as opposed to the Italianate terraces, Italian garden and fountains seen from the main entrance. The lakes of the lower park were surrounded by rockeries, such as in figure 5.12, and dense planting of ferns, wildflowers and plants like the delphiniums (or similar) depicted in figure 5.11 above. Together with the medieval grottos this design seems to invoke a nostalgic sense of old rural England, which was a key theme for those who championed the Public Park Movement (see chapter 1 for discussion of this.) It is worth noting, however, that many of the plants within this design may not have been native. William Robinson in his pioneering book The Wild Garden (1870) heralded in the cottage garden, a style with such endearing popularity that it is usually termed ‘English Country Garden Style’ to this day. While he championed the use of natives and locally adapted plants, planted according to growing conditions, his first chapter dedicates many pages to ‘naturalizing many beautiful plants of
many regions of the earth in our fields, woods and copses, outer parts of pleasure grounds, and in neglected places in almost every kind of garden'.

His viewpoint, in common with his contemporaries was informed by British exploration overseas. The effects of this process influenced the way in which this area of the Park was experienced. Combining naturalised non-native plants within a nostalgic design setting, evoking the English past, normalised and assimilated the exotic into the day-to-day experience of the park. For children playing in this area it is probable that they failed to notice the uniqueness of their environment as well as the impact that imperialism had upon it, something which may have been more obvious to their parents. However, the implications of this process would have been far-reaching. Children incorporated empire into their everyday experiences and in doing so cultivated aesthetic tastes and values which drew on a particular rendering of British national and imperial identities. The normalisation of the exotic is a theme that I shall return to when discussing the bandstand.

Figure 5.12: (Unattributed) *Greenhead Park, Huddersfield* (1889). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive. Image shows the smallest lake in Greenhead Park. The planting is dense around the lake as opposed to the wide flat paths surrounding the other lakes.

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Figure 5.13: (Smith Carter) *Greenhead Park Flowerbeds* (1910). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive.
These flowerbeds were often set out in designs which celebrated national events.

Not all exotic planting was assimilated into naturalistic design. Some by contrast were designed to stand out such as the brightly coloured flowers, deemed exotic and rare, produced in the park greenhouses in order to be planted out in flowerbed displays when celebrating national and local events (see figure 5.13). The use of these exotic plants in celebration once again links the park with the wider imperial project. To be able to grow exotic, non-native plants on demand represented the triumph of Victorian ingenuity over nature, while ensuring that national events were celebrated in a manner that reminded British onlookers of their privileged place in the world. The monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) near the entrance was another exotic incorporated into the overall park design as a unique feature. The Chilean pine tree was first introduced to Britain in 1795 by surgeon and botanist Archibald Menzies. However with the exception of the specimen at Kew, it was not until nurseryman John Veitch sent his gardener William Lobb to South America in 1840, with the express purpose of collecting exotic plants, especially the Monkey Puzzle, that the

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trees became available for purchase in Britain. During the second half of the century they quickly became ‘the ultimate fashion statement’ for upper-class gardens due to their striking difference. Despite the costs involved, the middle classes quickly followed suit and monkey puzzles began to spring up in suburban gardens across the country. Public parks also seemed to catch the mania (Saltwell Park also has a specimen).

The monkey puzzle tree in Greenhead Park would have been seen as an anomaly by the majority of those who visited it. However, the process by which the exotic specimen made its way to Britain would have been a relatively familiar story for children at this time. Anne Bowman was a well-respected children’s writer during the mid century, and perhaps somewhat unusually for a female author of the time established her reputation as an author of adventure fiction. In her novels The Travels of Rolando (1853) and The Boy Voyagers (1859) the young male protagonists travel east, visiting Mesopotamia, Persia, Kamchatka, Macao, China, Tibet, Japan, Malaysia and India, to name but a few, encountering adventures and danger on their way. As they travel they frequently pick up, study and collect many species of exotic plants and fruits to be taken home to Britain in order to be categorised, classified and named. For the boy adventurers in these tales, the study and collection of exotic plants takes place regardless of more pressing matters of life or death. For children back at home the planting of a monkey puzzle tree in the park aided them in visualising the explorations and adventures they read about in books.

Taylor highlights how through its design, the public park often displayed nature as part of a scientific narrative, with plants and trees there to be discovered and studied. The monkey puzzle certainly fulfilled this function, providing the opportunity for contemplation and close investigation. While they did not have such a unique specimen as in Greenhead Park, feature plants in Whitworth Park were labelled, mirroring the way in which cultural artefacts from other countries were labelled and displayed in museums. Similarly, Greenhead Park incorporated into its design artefacts more commonly seen in a museum setting, such as the Roman altar and classical pillars. Bennett has written how in a museum context, the display of artefacts of ‘otherness’ acted as a tool to dominate society, not

75 Noble, p. 158.
76 Taylor, p. 208.
through the dramatic show of force, but rather by positioning the people ‘conceived as a nationalized citizenry [...] on this side of power, both its subject and its beneficiary’. The visualisation of cultural supremacy was taken further when the glass conservatory was erected in this lower area of Greenhead Park in 1930. Filled with economically important, imported plants such as ‘tea, coffee, pineapple and tobacco’, this formed part of the original plan for the park yet was not fully realised until then. The visitor to the park viewing these natural and man-made exhibits became complicit in Britain’s economic scientific and cultural imperial dominance. The obviously educational emphasis of the planting, and the incorporation of artefacts in this area, was strongly aimed at children. This echoed the teaching of economics in relation to the nation and empire. This reflected the way in which the boys in The Travels of Ronaldo visit mulberry and tea plantations while in China, learning the processes behind the commodities they consumed at home. Bowman’s intention to educate her readers certainly seems to be replicated in the park landscape, however it also informed children of the processes of exploration. Children in the park may have played at exploring for themselves these unusual plants, drawing on their outside experiences and knowledge in engaging with the landscape.

Taylor suggests that ‘Victorian landscapists appreciated [...] nature scrutinized, organized, civilized, suburbanized, even’. They painted scenes of ‘managed beauty’, where ‘nature operated as a metaphor for an ideal and rational society’. Nature in these scenes is controlled, tamed, even civilised by the informed activities and ownership of men. This provides an interesting avenue for discussion into the way in which the child visitor engaged with a park landscape that employed the exotic as a managed, controlled specimen. By viewing, studying and enjoying the landscape with its diverse architecture and exotic planting, children could be seen to act as a sort of coloniser. Mastery here afforded through knowledge and also the processes of naturalisation acted upon exotic plants on the British soil. Children mimicked the exploration of adult colonisers abroad, encountering unfamiliar species, labelling them, studying them and ultimately assuming dominance over them through association with the British nation.

78 Griffiths, p. 44-45.
79 Taylor, p. 204.
80 Taylor, p. 204.
5.2.5 Viewing Platforms

Continuing up the hill from the lakes, the visitor crossed a number of grassy areas intersected with curving paths before approaching the belvedere from the side. This formal raised terrace, shown in figures 5.14 and 5.15, topped with classical columns and later the site of a WW1 memorial (figure 5.16) was one of the major focal points in the park. Viewing platforms like this were popular in parks and from the summit the visitor was able to reflect on the contrasting landscape below them, particularly the relationship between the informal ‘natural’ areas and the more formal built spaces. Cosgrove highlights the imperial undertones of this act, arguing that the term ‘landscape’ was a term derived from a particular way of representing space, which privileged the eye, and therefore the voyeur, as the dominant master over a space whose form varies depending on its distance from the centre of this visual world.\(^81\) Employing this ‘perspective’ the viewer could physically appropriate a particular area of land as territory, controlled and owned by the visual mastery of the person viewing it.\(^82\) Securing a future ‘prospect’ could be done by altering the landscape of say a familial estate, or as the term ‘prospecting’ hints at, securing land itself for future use. The idea of claiming land by observing it was critical in the colonial enterprise, even when the coloniser was not the first to have seen the landscape. The public park allowed children to experiment with this process of land appropriation through play, visually claiming their own territories in preparation for physical play.

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\(^81\) Denis Cosgrove, p. 48.
\(^82\) Cosgrove, p. 52.
**Figure 5.14:** (Unattributed), *Greenhead Park, Huddersfield* (Unknown). Photograph. Kirklees Image Archive. Image shows benches along the terrace in front of the belvedere.

**Figure 5.15:** Smith Carter, *Greenhead Park, Huddersfield* (1910). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive. Image shows the view from the belvedere terrace looking towards the bandstand.
Figure 5.16: Smith Carter, *Huddersfield War Memorial* (Unknown). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive. Image depicts the belvedere after the addition of the War Memorial Cross in 1924.

Figure 5.17: Smith Carter, *Bandstand in Greenhead Park* (1910). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive. Image showing the bandstand from a viewing platform during a performance.
Figure 5.18: Parks and Open Spaces Collection (Unattributed), *Greenhead Park Bandstand* (Unknown). Kirklees Image Archive.

Figure 5.15 depicts the view south from the belvedere, where the visitor could note the elaborate Japanese style bandstand. A second viewing platform above the large boating lake also allowed for closer views of this feature (see Figure 5.17), reflecting the importance of it within the landscape. The octagonal timber framed bandstand was set on a raised stone platform and embellished with ornate wooden corbels and decoration (see figure 5.18). The double roof was slated and topped with a weather vane. Classical style stone terracing surrounded the bandstand base, echoing the design of both the Italian Gardens to the east of the bandstand and the belvedere itself. By utilising oriental styles in park architecture, the designers were not just expressing admiration for the forms, but rather were making a statement about Britain’s cultural dominance in the world. In order to
explore this notion, the bandstand must also be considered within the context of the craze for Japanese style and the emergence of Japonisme, which began in the 1860s and 70s. The end of Japanese isolation (1853-67) brought European diplomats, traders and explorers in contact with products and styles previously unknown to them. Japanese products found their way onto the market in France and Britain, while fiction and non-fiction books about the country gained in popularity. William Dalton’s children’s book The Story of Mark Raffles; An English Boy’s Adventures among the Japanese (1871), captures how exploration was, as art historian Ayako Ono puts it ‘a confirmation of the triumph of (Western) culture, science and civilization. At the same time it was an opportunity to explore the unknown world’. In other words, the exploration of other cultures enabled the explorer to reflect on the familiar as well as the novel. Artists, architects and designers were also inspired by the hitherto unknown Japanese style however as Ono argues these ‘Japanese objects were “more or less adapted to the use of European life”’. Assimilated into new forms, merged with other influences from other parts of ‘the Orient,’ Japonisme was a reference point rather than a faithful replication. The use of the oriental style bandstand within the park continued the theme of creating the world in miniature within the landscape, representing the cultural ‘other’ rather than a specific nation. By juxtaposing this architectural style against the classical and medieval features in the park, the designers could play on a notion of a British identity. A sense of what Britain was came from an awareness of what it was not, the familiar was set in contrast to the exotic.

Archaeologists such as Casella have argued that the juxtaposition between the material culture of the exotic and the familiar acted as a way to neutralise other cultures by replicating them in a domestic setting. Edward Said’s seminal work, Orientalism (1978), has highlighted how the popular use of oriental motifs at this time was not just to do with the Victorian fascination for Eastern culture, but also a hegemonic system of categorising

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84 Ono, p. 6.
and homogenising cultures some of which were colonies. Applying this insight to the bandstand in Greenhead Park, we can acknowledge that it represents both a fascination with ‘the East’, and the process by which other cultures were homogenised, not only due to a sense of cultural superiority but also as a means by which to render them less threatening and more accessible. The terracing surrounding the bandstand was familiar to the visitor who had already explored the other areas of the park, and helped to frame and display the bandstand as a unique feature in the landscape for visual consumption. In this way the bandstand could be tamed and controlled, in the way a museum exhibit might be. This process was continued, perhaps unconsciously, in the way in which the bandstand was used. The bandstand was not only a visual feature of the landscape but was also an aural one. A concert put on in 1900 included patriotic compositions such as Bonnisseau’s Fantasia on Scotch airs ‘Robert Bruce’ and Round’s Fantasia on Songs of England. Another interesting inclusion in the programme was a selection of songs from Sidney Jones’ musical ‘Chinese’ comedy San Toy, first performed in London in 1899. The performance of a musical comedy about China, written in London and performed on an oriental style bandstand in Huddersfield, illustrates the way in which cultural life for Victorian children incorporated global influences on a day-to-day basis. This mixture of patriotic and military songs, as well as the comic songs, played on the bandstand could be seen as a way in which the oriental feature was naturalised, echoing the naturalisation of exotic plants. The bandstand in the park, becomes part of the eclectic culture of an imperial Britain. This can be illustrated in the experiences of Indian official T. N. Mukherji who visited London as a colonial native in 1889. He reports on the fascination he provoked in the British public but also how on being called a ‘foreigner’ the response was ‘He is no foreigner!’ cried several voices, ‘He is a British subject as you and I’. This process helped to inculcate children with a sense of Britishness, which tied together ideas about empire and nation. The park allowed children to explore and experiment with their British identities, at times playing the role of coloniser and at times the colonised. These material practices were part of the ways in which children

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86 For a discussion of this in relation to oriental forms of architecture see Mark Crinson, Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 4-6.
constructed a sense of who they were, and the public park was a significant space for this to take place.

Looking to the north from the terrace it was possible to see the ‘Kings Walk’, a path created in 1912 in order to facilitate the chosen route of George V and Mary on their visit to the park. This straight path was created leading from one of the minor entrances down towards the terrace, allowing the monarch to travel through the park by carriage. This path remained in place after the event and was renamed, forever etching the royal visit onto the landscape.\(^8^9\) The straightness of this path is significant in itself, mirroring the urban transformations taking place in the imperial capitals of Europe, such as the Haussmannisation of Paris and the monumentalisation of Brussels under Léopold II.\(^9^0\) Hancock argues that the creation of wide, straight boulevards, ‘the Agora of our Athens’ transformed Paris into a spectacle of imperialism.\(^9^1\) This was performed for the people through ‘promenades, panoramas, exhibitions, official processions and urban events’.\(^9^2\) The creation of a boulevard in Greenhead Park imbued the procession of George V and Mary with imperial grandeur, allowing the people of Huddersfield to experience individually the spectacle of British Empire. Children played a special role in this spectacular (discussed below) and for them the material permanence of this event ensured that their engagement with the space was infused with emotional and bodily memories. Children for example may have re-enacted their particular roles in the procession, or else taken on the roles of the soldiers, king and queen or local dignitaries. In this way again children materially practiced potential future identities in the park.

\(^8^9\) David Griffiths, p. 31.
\(^9^1\) Claire Hancock, ‘Capitale du Plaisir: The Remaking of Imperial Paris’ in Imperial Cities, ed. by Driver and Gilbert, pp. 64-95 (p. 76).
\(^9^2\) Hancock, p. 68.
5.2.6 Playing Fields

Figure 5.19: Smith Carter, *Glenholt Chapel from Greenhead Park* (1910). Postcard. Kirklees Image Archive. Image shows the playing field with sheep grazing on it.

Figure 5.20: Arthur Dunn (publisher), *King Albert Belgian School* (1916-17). Photograph. Brent Council Image and Photograph Collection. Pupils playing cricket in Queens Park.
The ‘Kings Walk’ ran parallel to the large grassy area shown in figure 5.19 and known as the playing field. While lacking in architectural or planting features, this area was nonetheless important in exploring the way in which the experience of the park was shaped by notions of nationalism and imperialism. This area provided children with the space to perform sports and other activities, sometimes guided by adults and at other times not. One of the underlying factors in the creation of public parks was the notion of rational recreation. Bailey writes how physical exercise was deemed ‘an important agent for moral and social discipline’. Parks provided a space for this improving exercise to take place. During the early history of the public park, promenading was portrayed as the ideal family activity within the park space, encouraged through the creation of circular pathways which intersected the landscape. However by the 1890s games such as cricket and football along with athletics were increasingly being promoted for boys, while tennis, gymnastics and dance were deemed appropriate for girls. This demonstrates how football in particular was promoted for working-class boys as a means by which to impart middle-class values of ‘health, endurance, courage, judgement, and above all else a sense of fair play’. As Montague Shearman wrote in 1888, ‘the game is manly and fit for Englishmen; it puts courage into their hearts to meet any enemy in the face’. In this way the playing of games was linked closely to a masculine national identity. J. A. Mangan has explored this theme extensively in relation to public schools. In his work *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (1981) he first charts the emergence of a cult of athleticism in a number of elite boy’s public schools in the second half of the nineteenth century. His later work *The Games Ethic and Imperialism* (1985) seeks to demonstrate how this was taken outside of the school walls and used as a tool by which to impose a particular ideal of British masculine identity throughout the Empire, as he puts it ‘character training through

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93 Peter Bailey, p. 25.
94 Wyborn, pp. 3-14.
97 Shearman, pp. 369-70.
98 Mangan, *Athleticism*. 
games’. Figure 5.20 depicts pupils from King Albert Belgian School playing cricket in Queens Park, London during WW1. This highlights how the park facilitated this spread of games from the school ground to the park. For Mangan, sports were a means by which imperial-minded institutions could inculcate in children a set of values that supported the continued existence and expansion of British power abroad.

Despite the popularity of these sports many parks, including Whitworth and Greenhead Park, chose not to offer specific facilities for playing games like tennis, football or cricket, although by the mid-1920s Greenhead Park was expanded to include tennis courts and bowling greens. This was partly to do with a lack of space, certainly the case at Whitworth Park, but also perhaps an unwillingness to encourage ‘rowdy behaviour’ in others. The increased interest in physical exercise for children was due, in historian Sally Shuttleworth’s words, to a view of children as the ‘embodiment both of all past history and as an expression of future possibility’. As recapitulated exponents of human civilisation they required to be able to run around and to use up excess energy, while as future citizens, their fitness and health both physically and morally was essential for the continued dominance of Britain on a global scale. Parks aimed to satisfy both requirements. Newspaper commentators praised Whitworth Park for having ‘as much green turf as children who are tired of straight walks could wish for’ as well as logs deliberately placed to provide ‘mild gymnastic training’. The author of the latter piece stressed how the children did not suspect that the logs they climbed over were anything more than fun objects. The implication is of course that if the children knew that their activities were fulfilling an adult objective, creating fit and healthy children for the future of the empire, they may not want to take part. This dissonance between adult’s objectives and children’s motivation is symptomatic of recreation in the park. Parks were designed to facilitate particular forms of behaviour, often with specific notions of empire in mind, and children interpreted and used these designs in their own way. Sometimes, unwittingly or not they fulfilled the design objectives of the parks, and at other times they subverted them in order

100 ‘Whitworth Park, Manchester’, *The Manchester Courier*, 16 June 1890, p. 5.
101 Shuttleworth, p. 267.
to satisfy their own purpose. The following section will now explore children’s acts in the park in greater depth.

5.3 Children’s Acts

As demonstrated through the above discussion of park design, children were often at the heart of thinking about nationalism and imperialism. However, children using the parks did not just passively internalise adult instruction on nation and empire implicitly and sometimes explicitly set out in the park design. Rather, they appropriated and played with these cultural messages in order to structure their own experiences and interactions. In doing so they constructed new meanings, negotiated and actively contributed to adult culture as well as to their own peer cultures. This section will look at the ways in which children engaged with messages of nationalism and imperialism while in the park. It will investigate the way this shaped their day-to-day experience of organised activities in the park, celebrations and events, and most significantly, play, both with the material culture they brought into the park, and imaginatively. It will be argued that children adapted aspects of nationalism and imperialism in order to facilitate forms of play that challenged normative practices, such as girls participating in warfare. Furthermore it encouraged a particular use of the park landscape, which allowed children along with their peers to become ‘petty imperialists’, prospecting and taking ownership of the space. In contrast to this, children also became stage actors in the spectacle of nationalism and empire played out in the park. Their role in this adult dominated performance was often as the savage or exotic ‘other’.

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104 A parallel can be found here in Kalshoven’s work on Indian hobbyism. She uses theories of play to look at how adult ‘Indianists’ explored notions of otherness, nature and tradition. See above for reference.
5.3.1 Scouting

The previous chapter briefly noted how organised games and activities for children took place in the parks in response to a growing emphasis on children’s health and fitness. The section on design above further argued that this emphasis was closely linked to a conception of children as the embodiment of future hope for the nation and empire. Aspects of park design demonstrated that the idea that children may have to be coerced into participation in this project, through disguising exercise as play. Scouting groups and boy’s brigades that frequently practiced in public parks were far more explicit in the way they constructed militarism, imperialism and nationalism as a game. The park offered a space in which groups like the Boy’s Brigade and the Scouts could practice their endeavours and promote their activities through displays and drills. As Boone points out, while scouting is firmly associated with anti-urbanism and a ‘nostalgic view of the countryside’, it seeks to train ‘Scouts to become well-prepared urban adventurers’. The park as an urban interpretation of nature seems to have been the perfect space for this training to take place and indeed later on for children to practice independent of adult supervision. Figures 5.21 and 5.22 show boys engaged in activities with the Boy’s Brigade and the Boy Scouts in public parks. It is clear from the images that both of these institutions engaged children in play that either promoted militarism or else aimed to offer preparedness for war. Boys in uniform holding replica guns, lined up as if they formed a military regiment, are posed in front of the Victoria Park oriental style bandstand in figure 5.21. This image echoes photos taken from the front line of the Boer War, part of the mass of amateur war photography, which appeared for the first time during this conflict. Depicting soldiers in these settings not only legitimised Britain’s imperial actions abroad, but also demonstrated colonial dominance over foreign soil. The bandstand, a symbol of exoticism, but also colonial power is conquered and overpowered in a similar way by the urban child imperialists. Dominated entirely by the child soldiers, the bandstand is no longer the main feature of the image, but is rather a background element, subjugated by the militaristic actions of the Boy’s Brigade.

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105 Boone, pp. 122-123.
106 Ryan, pp.79-86
The image of children taking part in a medical drill also supports the idea of the park as a space for urban warfare to take place. The scene depicted shows well-drilled scouts recovering a wounded soldier from the field. Part of the attraction of engaging urban children in this sort of activity was the visibility of it. The photographs themselves, as well as the location for these activities, suggest that these were designed to be highly visible to the public and to other children. Even when children were not being guided by adults in these performances, they could engage with the idea of the park as a landscape of war and adventure, through witnessing the playful military occupation and drilling of organised groups.

Figure 5.21: (Unattributed), Boys’ Brigade, 1st Leith Company Battalion inspection in front of the bandstand in Victoria Park (1908). The 1st Leith Boys’ Brigade Company Ex-Members Association.
While it is assumed often that girls had no role in these activities, Proctor highlights how girls enthusiastically created scouting groups, officially or otherwise. They were lured by the chance to participate in ‘the colonial fantasy life of tracking, camping, outdoor cooking, and adventure that Scouting offered’. They revelled in the chance to be tomboys, escaping into a make-belief world in which they were offered adventures not available to them in real life. Within the park railings children were given the space, landscape and freedom to engage in this imaginary play, which may have been impossible at home or in school for fear of attempts to regulate them. This was particularly relevant to girls. Girls scouting was seen as problematic, jeopardising a girl’s ‘womanliness, gentleness, and nurturing’, qualities that were regarded as essential in the imperial mothers of tomorrow. The militaristic nature of scouting was deemed appropriate for boys who would it was thought undertake military service. For girls it was deemed necessary to start up a new organisation, the Girl Guides, which taught cooking, nature study and childcare

108 Proctor, p. 8.
alongside first aid, signalling and hiking.\textsuperscript{109} A number of Girl Scouts groups remained although the instruction they received was increasingly tailored towards providing support to the Boy Scouts, such as in figure 5.23 where girls treat a ‘wounded’ boy scout. Proctor argues that by challenging girls to ‘sacrifice for home, country, and empire’, while simultaneously instructing them in womanly traits, the organisation hoped to inspire ‘girls to be heroines in their everyday lives who fantasized about the glories of roughing it on the imperial frontiers, all the while training to be good wives and mothers at home’:\textsuperscript{110} The park was supervised and yet offered greater space and opportunity to interact with others, than the home or school. Children could play within eyesight of adults and yet out of earshot. Furthermore, some children were brought into the park by older siblings who may have been sympathetic to their aims. For girls this may have allowed them the opportunity to play at being ‘boyish’, rejecting the attempts to regulate their scouting endeavours to the provision of care and nurturing and instead embracing militaristic and exploratory roles.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Figure 5.23:} (Unattributed), \textit{Girl Scouts providing first aid to a Boy Scout}, (circa 1908-1910). Photograph. Scouts Association Heritage Collection.
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\textsuperscript{109} Proctor, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{110} Proctor, p. 10.
Boy’s Brigades, Scouts and Guides set up rapidly across Britain in the early twentieth century, using the urban landscapes around them to perfect their wilderness skills, animal tracking and combat, or else their first aid, signalling and hiking amongst other useful practices. Not all children were able to afford uniforms for these organisations, indeed Baden-Powell admitted that his organisation rarely reached the working-class boys it was aimed at. Nevertheless, with the aid of Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship (1908), Baden Powell’s manifesto published in six fortnightly episodes, children were able to set up unofficial groups without the backing of a local body and participate in the activities prescribed. Furthermore until 1910 official recognition was granted to any group who filled in a form bought from the serialised book’s publisher Pearsons’, regardless of adult support. Boone argues that at the heart of the Scouting endeavour was the prevention of the decline of the empire. It sought to achieve this by instilling middle-class values in working-class boys, whilst engaging them in surveillance against other members of the working classes. In this way the ‘savagery’ present in children could be civilised by the middle classes, whilst also preventing an ‘animalistic regression suffered as a result of identification with working-class urban culture’. The public park complimented this programme by providing the ideal space for the surveillance, practice and implementation of these moral codes. Children frequently came into contact with children and adults from different backgrounds while in the parks, in a way which no other institution of the time offered. Furthermore, the parks were designed to facilitate surveillance, particularly in areas where children played.

While children undoubtedly regulated other children they could also subvert the ideal of the scouting project and seek to regulate adults. Historian Nan Dreher has noted how public parks altered ‘patterns of social interaction’ by bringing together people from varying backgrounds on an equal footing. She has argued that a new exclusivity based on respectability rather than class emerged and that respectability was the means by which a person demonstrated their eligibility for citizenship. Likewise fellow historian Andy Croll

111 Boone, p. 126.
112 Boone, pp. 85-106.
113 Boone, p. 122.
115 Dreher, p. 246.
has investigated instances of surveillance in a late-Victorian town, to argue that the public employed a ‘gaze of civilization’, usually gendered male, shaming and regulating non-respectable behaviour such as women being unsupervised in public.\textsuperscript{116} Dreher further highlights the increasing attention paid to courting couples in parks who some felt had the ability to corrupt children and lead them into immoral behaviour themselves through witnessing their behaviour.\textsuperscript{117} Accounts from the parks at the heart of this thesis however suggest that children were themselves involved in acts of moral judgement assimilated from adult society and aimed in particular at these couples. Letters to the \textit{Huddersfield Chronicle} in 1892 and 1894 already discussed in section 4.4.2, revealed how children occupied park benches and made ‘very personal remarks about ladies and gentlemen passing’.\textsuperscript{118} The accounts, along with similar from Saltwell Park, suggest that children were actively targeting courting couples. Images of Whitworth Park show how park benches played a material role in facilitating what Croll calls the ‘gaze of civilization’, facing inwards along pathways rather than outwards towards a view, they offered the person sitting there the chance to observe other park visitors.\textsuperscript{119} In figure 5.24 the woman at the front of the image walks with her head titled down, avoiding eye contact with the camera, as does the young girl at her side. The boy in the middle of the image by contrast not only walks down the middle of the path, but he also confronts the photographer with his gaze. This highlights the gendered differences involved in the act of promenading but also suggests how children were socially aware of gendered behaviour in the park. An article in \textit{Girls Own Paper} from 1890 may have helped increase this awareness as it instructed girls in how to avoid the regulating gaze, remaining respectable and avoiding public shaming. It instructed girls to ‘always look straight before you, or on the opposite side when passing any man’.\textsuperscript{120} No images exist of the moments when children in the parks occupied the benches to employ their own regulating gaze, but we might imagine that for the couples promenading, passing by these children encouraged them to act in a way similar to the woman in image 5.24, attempting to avoid the gaze of the children and avoid being publically shamed. Certainly the affected

\textsuperscript{117} Dreher, p. 257.
\textsuperscript{118} ‘Evenings in Greenhead Park’, \textit{Huddersfield Chronicle}, 13 July 1894, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{119} Croll, p. 259.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Girls Own Paper}, 6 December 1890.
adults chose to call on the children’s parents to prevent them from carrying out this behaviour, rather than tackling them in person in the Park, suggesting that they felt themselves to be at a disadvantage during this reoccurring situation. This was then a very effective tool used by children to engage in social behaviour and active citizenship which they felt was meaningful even though not necessarily intended for them. Internalising messages of respectability and surveillance articulated for example in the scouting project, children interpreted these messages in their own way and carried them out effectively. Of course in doing so they drew further regulation on themselves, demonstrating how children operated within and had to negotiate complex and often competing societal demands.

Figure 5.24: (Unattributed), *A Sunday Walk (circa 1900)*. Postcard. Rusholme Archive.

5.3.2 Spectacles

Parks throughout Britain were often the focus of local involvement in national events. In June 1902 celebrations for the coronation of Edward VII were enjoyed nationwide, despite the postponing of the actual ceremony until August due to the King’s ill health. Many of the
festivities took place in local parks and involved local children. In Manchester, 53 bands, including children from the Band of Hope movement, undertook to play continuous music throughout the day in the parks. Some of the city parks were decorated along with police stations, libraries and public baths, symbolically linking parks with other important Victorian institutions. Trees were to be planted in all parks and many also hosted ‘maypole dancing’ for girls and ‘physical drill’ for boys.\textsuperscript{121} Around 114,000 boys and girls also received commemorative medals and boxes of chocolates and were served a celebratory breakfast.\textsuperscript{122} One such commemorative medal was found during the excavation of Whitworth Park, depicting the King and Queen on one side and the word ‘Coronation’ on the reverse. The fact that this medal was lost or left by its owner whilst in the park suggests that Whitworth Park was either a site for specific events, or was used by local residents as part of their celebrations. These events not only allowed children to witness the spectacle of empire but also to become themselves part of the spectacle. The displays of gymnastics, dancing and drilling they performed exhibited them as exotics to be visually consumed. This reflected the way in which the flower bed exotic plants were used to celebrate national events. By incorporating them in the celebration of national events, children could be transformed into exponents of imperial nationalism. Figure 5.25 shows that during the visit of George V and Mary to Greenhead Park in 1912, discussed above. Children lined the route of the monarch along the streets and down the newly created ‘Kings Walk’.\textsuperscript{123} Troops of soldiers marched along this route following the monarchs bordered by local children (see figure 5.26). This echoes the procession of soldiers drawn from the colonies at the Jubilee celebrations. By assimilating children as troops into the military display, they became British subjects, as Mukherji did, through his connection to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition which brought him to England.

\textsuperscript{121} ‘Coronation news’, \textit{The Manchester Guardian}, 24 June 1902, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{122} ‘Coronation news’, \textit{The Manchester Guardian}, 24 June 1902, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{123} ‘Court and Personal’, \textit{Yorkshire Post}, 12 July 1912, p. 6.
Figure 5.25: Hayley Gordon Brierly Collection, *Children line up for the Royal Visit of King George V and Queen Mary*, (1912). Photograph. Kirklees Image Collection.

Figure 5.26: Hayley Gordon Brierly Collection, *Troops marching during Royal Visit of King George V and Queen Mary, Greenhead Park* (1912). Photograph. Kirklees Image Collection.
Figure 5.27: (Not attributed), *Whitworth Art Gallery, Whitworth Park, Manchester* (circa 1913). Postcard. Rusholme Archive.

Spectacles of nationalism and imperialism were not only carried out on a national scale but could also be localised, linking individual towns and regions to the wider state, nation and empire. Following his death in 1910, a statue of Edward VII was erected in Whitworth Park, Manchester, opposite the Royal Infirmary he opened in 1909 (see figure 5.27). The statue served as a reminder not only of an abstract authority but also of local patronage. It was unveiled by the Lady Mayoress in a well-attended ceremony in 1913. This had been due to tie in with the visit to Manchester of George V and Mary the previous year, but due to the statue being unfinished, they were instead driven past and shown the park. This was once again an opportunity for the local residents, to engage with the monarchy through the landscape of the park. For many of those present, the memory of the coronation celebrations of Edward VII, which took place in the same park, would have lent a poignant edge to the ceremony. Many of the children who took part in these coronation celebrations 11 years previously would have grown up by the time of the unveiling of the monument. No longer part of the spectacle they instead witnessed the unveiling of the statue as full British citizens. The impressions of the event in their childhood would have undoubtedly impacted upon their engagement with the statue as an adult. Children present
at the unveiling would not necessarily have been influenced in the same way by past events, yet the size and grandeur of the statue, a potent symbol of authority over the nation and empire still dominated their experience of the park. The park was likely to be the main site of direct engagement with the empire, outside of the classroom. These moments of national and imperial history could be experienced corporeally through bodily practice and sensory experience; the sights, sounds and feelings leaving deep and lasting impressions on those who engaged with them. Archaeologist Sarah Tarlow highlights how landscapes are subject to ‘emotional understandings’, or rather can become associated with particular feelings.\textsuperscript{124} It is likely that the embodied experience of these events of nation and empire were coloured by the fact that they were experienced within the park landscape, a space associated with fun and joy.

This can be taken further to suggest that the use of parks to house memorial structures like the ‘fallen heroes’ statue may have led to a positive association between play and war. While it is important not to overstate this point, after all children were exposed to many other competing associations in their day-to-day experiences, it is not hard to see how the elaborate spectacles surrounding the unveiling of a war memorial added to the sense that it was good and glorious to die for your country. Furthermore, the statue was a larger than life version of the toys soldiers which boys played with in the park (discussed further below). Literary critics have highlighted how boy’s literature increasingly extolled the virtues of empire throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century and in the run up to the First World War. Dunae describes how the militaristic side of this imperialistic fervour, present in publications such as \textit{Chums} (1892-1934) and the short-lived but popular \textit{Boys of Our Empire} (1900-1903), celebrated ‘the warlike character of the British “race” and stressed the need for maintaining the empire at all cost.’\textsuperscript{125} Celebrated children’s author Gordon Stables exemplified the sentiment that war was both a glorious and a necessary part of the empire:

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
What we have we mean to hold,/ Though pretended friend at home may scowl,/ Though blood be shed,/ And men fall dead, And Savage foes around us howl [...] 126

The park landscape provided a space for the negotiation of an imperial identity based for boys on militaristic heroism and for girls on the abstention from this and instead the assimilation of an ideal of nurturing motherhood. The war memorials in public parks were symbols of the lives lost and blood spilled in the cause of the empire. At the same time they could be seen to articulate the promise of a glorious, heroic death for town, for country, for the Empire; a chance to participate in a global spectacle of honour and military strength. This was further emphasised by having a war hero, Lieutenant General French, to unveil the monument. Furthermore memorials formed part of a wider message articulated in the material culture of the park and of childhood, that warfare and imperialism were fun. It was in the context of this that children sought to define their own identities and the park landscape provided space for this negotiation to take place.

Section 4.4.2 in the previous chapter discussed a report in the parks committee meeting minutes that stated how children had been repeatedly ‘throwing stones and mud’ at the statue of King Edward VII. 127 This act of disobedience so clearly at odds with the patriotic message of the public parks reveals how the process of defining childhood identities was more complex than a straightforward assimilation process. Instead children rejected or reinterpreted ideals and expressed their own values through practice. The statue, a material symbol of abstract authority was used in this way to express a sense of independence from the adult endorsed ideals manifested in the park landscape.

5.3.3 Games with Toys

Section 5.1 highlighted how nationalism and imperialism permeated society. Children’s material culture demonstrated this clearly. The excavations in Whitworth Park uncovered toys which provide further insight into the way in which play and military imperialism could

127 GML-GB127-MB40, 13 January 1922.
be linked. Figure 5.28 shows a lead toy soldier, with still visible blue painted trousers and a broken sword, excavated from the lake bed. Social historians have begun to investigate the link between the role of toys and adult behaviour, in particular the link between the popularity of toy soldiers and the rate of enlistment at the beginning of WW1. In 1893, William Britain set up his factory pioneering a technique producing hollow-cast soldiers, like the one found in Whitworth Park. Prior to this point the majority of toy soldiers had been imported from France and Germany. Within three years of the soldier going on sale, some 200,000 toy figures were leaving the factory each week. Brown suggests that by 1914 some 10 or 11 million toy soldiers were being produced annually for the domestic market. This British economic success story, operating under the dependable name of ‘Britains’, added a patriotic edge to the buying of and playing with toys. Varney argues that the ‘distinction between reality and fantasy can be tenuous in relation to war’, citing the early twentieth-century order placed with Britains from a former Secretary of State for War as well as the continued use of war gaming as a means by which to prepare current day soldiers for combat. Brown further cites the lecture delivered by Prince Arthur of Connaught in 1872, which recommended that the British military might take up Kreigspiel (war play), a war simulation game that had been adopted by the Prussian forces as a training tool. For the purposes of this thesis it is not necessary to draw conclusions as to whether or not playing with toy soldiers caused children to be militaristic, it is perhaps enough to note that Rational Dress reformist, and children’s novelist Constance Lloyd, argued this exact point in her 1888 speech to the International Arbitration and Peace Society. It is worth stressing how these toys, in connection with the militaristic paraphernalia which seemed omnipresent in the years 1880 to 1914, as well as the

131 Brown, p. 239.
132 Brown, p. 239.
133 Varney, p. 386.
glorification of the soldier to hero status, created a culture in which militarism and warfare was deemed to be a positive, patriotic, and for children (as well as some adults) a fun pastime. The public park was a significant site for the public expression of this ideal, as well as a space in which to engage with material culture imbued with this message.

Figure 5.28: Alan Seabright (photographer), *Toy Soldier Excavated from Whitworth Park* (2013). Photograph. Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project.
This message is most explicit in the example of toy soldiers aimed at boys. However, a corresponding feminised imperial ideal was expressed in the promotion of dolls for girls. Soldiers and dolls offered a vision of militaristic and orderly boyhood on the one hand and compassionate and mothering girlhood on the other. The production of cheap versions of toys as well as a booming second-hand market meant that play objects like these could be afforded by many parents of children who used the parks. The production of complimentary toys to be played with alongside a doll, such as the hairbrush or tea sets we found in the Whitworth Park excavations, offered cheaper play objects to prolong the activities offered from one doll. These activities complimented the idealised vision of girls as future mothers of the empire, caring for their dolls and providing sustenance and education to them. The popularity of these toys was further expressed in their use in children’s fiction, particularly in fiction aimed at younger children such as the countless examples in the journal *Little Folks*. This reflects both their popularity, but also the way in which these toys were seen as useful tools to impose gendered messages.

Children were afforded a certain degree of freedom to resist the imposition of gendered behaviour while playing in the park, due in part to their employment of imaginary play. This does not mean however that there were not attempts to regulate play with these specific toys, which were thought to encourage children to develop characteristics deemed appropriate for their future gendered roles within nation and empire. This was particularly obvious in the way girls were encouraged to play with their dolls. In *Ethel’s Adventures in Doll Country* (1880), Ethel refuses to treat her dolls as her children (resisting expectations about her nurturing, caring female identity), blaming them and punishing them for her own misdemeanours. Subverting her role as a girl further, she engages her dolls in games with her brother, court marshalling them, conducting mock trials and even executing them after finding them guilty. While this is clearly acceptable for her brother to do with his toy soldiers, Ethel’s perceived mistreatment of her dolls leads to one of them running away. In attempting to find her missing doll one night Ethel stumbles in Doll Land and is herself put

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138 Brown, p. 240.
on trial for failing to treat her dolls as expected. While Ethel gets to explore this other land, her imperial adventures are clearly not as fun as she had hoped and predictably, Ethel reforms her boyish, militaristic ways and becomes an exemplary maternal figure to her dolls. Through the wider material culture of play children were exposed to disciplinary messages which attempted to regulate even their imaginations, even while their experiences in the park were less subject to thought control. The way that experience of the tangible world was affected through the imposition of the intangible and imaginary is a particular insight of this work.

5.3.4 Petty Imperialists

![Figure 5.29: (Unattributed), The Children’s Corner, Whitworth Park (Unknown). Manchester City Archives Local Image Collection.](image)

As noted in the section on park design, many areas of the park in particular the belvedere and viewing platforms at Greenhead Park encouraged visitors to act as prospectors, commanding a visual mastery over the landscape. Children were not exempt from this
process although it is perhaps doubtful that they would have been the intended audience for this sort of activity. Within the parks the varying terrain and layouts offered many opportunities for children to appropriate territory from other children and from adults. Acting as petty imperialists they could divide up the landscape into areas, guided by the park design, and colonise their chosen territories both consciously and unconsciously through play. Postcard images and written reports of the parks from this era show the results of this colonisation. Lakesides, grassy areas and playgrounds were strongly linked to children and their presence in those areas denoted ownership and in the postcard image above (figure 5.29) that shows the lakeside area depicted as ‘the children’s corner.’ Park designers enabled this ‘land grab’ by providing spaces that encouraged active exploration, visual survey and close physical engagement with the terrain. Postcard images of the parks show how lakesides were extremely popular with children. These were usually surrounded by an area of hard standing, separated from the path by a low railing. Children appropriated these spaces by climbing over the railings, discovering for themselves territory that was not instantly accessible to adults (it being perhaps unseemly for an adult to step over the railings.) The act of climbing or crossing the railings provided an additional layer of difficulty in reaching the territory beyond, mirroring the stories of exploration which filled children’s magazines and books.

Children engaging in territorial gain at the lake edge would have been familiar with the process of asserting imperial ownership through prospecting, having experienced it through literary fiction. Rudyard Kipling’s book *Kim* (1901) was a popular example of this. The book’s hero, a poor British orphan boy is raised immersed in Indian culture. He embarks on a series of adventures and is recruited and trained as a surveyor (spy) by the British Secret Service. The surveyor’s role was to assist the British in asserting their ownership of India by documenting and surveying the landscape. Viewing, charting and learning the territory here denoted ownership. If seeing afforded the voyeur power and ownership over the landscape, then the imaginary landscape created by children could be especially significant as spaces to play within. Richard Jefferies captured the act of imaginary prospecting in his book *Bevis: The Story of a Boy* (1882). Bevis and his friend Mark play in the woods near their home, fighting savages and Indians and conquering territory along the
banks of a stream which acts in turns as the Nile, the Amazon and the Mississippi. The boys visualise the landscape around them, utilising impressions and visions of countries learnt about in school and in books. They become the masters of this terrain, a landscape that not even those who unwittingly become part of their vision could dominate. While the two boys engage in play, Bevis retains ultimate control over the imaginary landscape, and he rejects a number of Mark’s suggestions as a way of asserting this. Ultimately they are playing within his vision of landscape and as the surveyor; it is he who owns the space.

For children within the park, familiar with the notion that ‘I saw it first’ denoted ownership, the varied terrain offered countless possibilities for imposing ownership onto the landscape. The landscape could be transformed into whatever territory the individual or collective vision saw. Childhood memories of playing in Greenhead Park contained in a letter to the *Huddersfield Examiner* in 1920 describe a similar commandeering of the park landscape and architecture to employ in imaginary play. The author notes that ‘the terrace was a stone terrace and tangible, but the house, palace or mansion belonging to it was a house not built with hands [...]. It could be any style of architecture you wished [...]. It could bristle with turrets and towers and castellated battlements, green shutters and striped awnings, hanging baskets and hoisted flags [...]. The rough rocks behind the terrace could be furniture, or horses, or bicycles, at will’. This area of the park, perhaps not immediately striking as an area popular with children, afforded multiple possibilities for creating imaginary play landscapes. The language used here references castles and towers, perhaps emphasising a medieval style of architecture seen in the lakeside arbours. The author of this source does not reveal their gender, recalling a memory where either hanging baskets or hoisted flags had their place. This reveals how imaginary children’s play could be less impacted by prescribed gender norms than guided play. It is almost impossible to tell the gender of the child playing these games, suggesting that our present day views, as well as those of the late-Victorian and Edwardian adults, are coloured by gendered expectations of play.

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139 Jefferies, *Bevis*, p. 50.


Furthermore, within these spaces smaller territories and locations could be appropriated for individuals or for groups as part of play activities. This is exemplified in the game of ‘King of the Castle’ included in Kate Greenaway’s *Book of Games* (1889). A child ‘ascends a little hillock and calls himself “King”’.¹⁴¹ The King must then ‘repel’ attempts to depose him from his position.¹⁴² Mounds, hillocks, tree stumps, rocks and countless other objects within the park landscapes provided territories to be conquered and fought over. The castellated grottos by the lakesides in particular evoked the fantasy of knights in armour toppling kings. The language used by Greenaway to describe the game places emphasis on terms such as ‘deposing’ and ‘position’, terms which demonstrate the assimilation of military terminology within children’s culture at the time.¹⁴³ As the images show, girls were not excluded from prospecting the lakeside areas. In fact books like Greenaway’s *Book of Games* were aimed at both genders, despite including games like ‘King of the Castle’. Her illustrations depict boys and girls playing together prospecting for gold, such as in figure 5.30 (Tom Tiddler’s Ground) or capturing each other’s national flag (French and English).¹⁴⁴

In the context of the ongoing ‘scramble for Africa’ the latter game once again demonstrates how imperial acts became assimilated into children’s culture. By transforming them into acts of play it was possible to see Britain’s activities abroad as ‘The Great Game’, a term made widespread through Rudyard Kipling’s children’s book *Kim* (1901.) This was made more explicit in the patriotic images like figure 5.31, which accompanied stories in popular magazines such as *Chums* (1892-1932).¹⁴⁵ These images dramatised the myth of Empire, influencing the way young people understood Britain’s involvement in the rest of the world and the desire for global expansion. Internalising these images, children could then re-enact exploration in the park, the landscape variably interpreted as desert sands, the North West frontier or the Heights at Dargai, experiencing for themselves the thrill of heroic action through unfettered play (indeed the campaign at Dargai resulted in the awarding of four Victoria Crosses). This was seen by adults as installing ‘desirable character traits’, as children

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¹⁴² Greenaway, p. 25.
¹⁴³ Greenaway, p. 25.
¹⁴⁴ Greenaway, p. 28, and p. 47.
were the ‘potential imperialists of the future, destined for careers [...] as guardians of Britain’s world position’.  

5.4 Conclusion

Children were deeply significant in the way that the late-Victorians and Edwardians viewed and experienced nationalism and imperialism. They were constructed as a symbol of hope for the future success of the nation and empire, fulfilling roles as potential soldiers, mothers, citizens and colonisers in the collective imagination of the British public. This was expressed in the material culture of childhood at the time, the games children played and the books they read. This chapter has argued that the public park was part of this material expression of nation and empire: a space where these notions could be rendered visible, tangible and meaningful to those who visited. Parks were spaces for children to be exposed to, learn about, and become inculcated with, ideas of nationalism, imperialism, patriotism and citizenship. Parks were not only filled with architecture and planting which referenced aspects of Britain’s imperial identity, but they also facilitated a means by which visitors could culturally colonise and assimilate foreign and exotic items through labeling and display. To survey the parks from one of the many viewpoints empowered the visitor to dominate and conquer the landscape. In this way the park offered visitors an embodied experience of Empire.

Children were not exempt from these practices and could also act the part of the coloniser within the landscape, yet the sentiment behind this regime sometimes situated children as a colonial ‘other’. Events such as coronations, royal visits or the unveiling of statues commemorating ‘fallen heroes’ or figures of imperial power provided children with the opportunity to become imperial actors, at least in terms of spectacle. The displays of gymnastics, dancing and drill that they performed positioned them as exotics, much like the flower beds also provided for visual consumption. The idea that children were little savages who required civilizing was expressed through these practices and it was through

participation in these spectacles that ‘savage’ children could be assimilated into the imperial family. The encouragement of athletics and military-inspired group activities further revealed the ways in which children were thought to require civilizing or training in order to become part of the imperial enterprise. The highly visible nature of some of this training, particularly obvious in relation to the scouting movement, meant that even those who could not take part in these activities were encouraged to view the park landscape in terms of militarism and warfare. Absorbing this message, children engaged in self-directed play that was imbued with contemporary understandings over nationalism and imperialism.

The training or civilizing of children from savages to citizens was not straightforward however. In their own practices of play in the park, children assimilated and engaged with explicit imperial messages, but also set about negotiating and redefining their own interpretations. Using the park landscape imaginatively through playing games of war and exploration and make-belief, children embodied and explored themes of empire and their roles within it and sometimes challenged them through non-normative modes of play. This could lead them into trouble as they attempted to express their own imperial identities in a manner visible to adults, whether by throwing stones at a statue or by subverting their instruction in class surveillance. This behaviour underlined the adult imposed idea of children as savages and was backed up by the institutions of the park. Regulated and controlled by the landscape and by the park authorities, the experience of the park for children was one in which they were subject to the dominant power of others. This was despite the fact that they were informed that the park in fact belonged to them. A Manchester Guardian commentator observing children in Whitworth Park, known properly as Whitworth ‘Children’s Park’, writes of them that ‘they are simple folk, and their horizon is limited. Some of them think the park belongs to the keepers, whom very properly, they regard with awe. When told that it is...in fact their own park, they shrink away, as from a truth too great for contemplation’.\textsuperscript{147} The imagery of the park keeper as a benevolent peacekeeper, living in and guarding over the landscape on behalf of an immature people is instantly recognisable as a trope of Victorian colonialism.

More successfully children were able to resort to imaginary play to express their own ideas of their role within the nation and empire. In their own make-belief worlds, children

\textsuperscript{147} ‘The Children’s Park’, The Manchester Guardian, 8 August 1903, p. 5.
could subvert adult-imposed identification of them as ‘savages’ and become ‘petty imperialists’ of their own making, regardless of the imposed social norms of class and gender. Playing games of territorial gain and warfare was available to both girls and boys, while games involving soldiers and dolls, could express children’s unique interpretation or rejection of the cultural messages they were exposed to. The public park in this way was significant, not just in the inculcation of adult notions of nationalism and imperialism, but also in children’s own expressions of the same, whether this conformed to adult expectations or not. The park was instrumental in materially constructing these peer cultures and formed a significant part of the experience of nation and empire for children at the time.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

This thesis has examined the way in which notions of childhood influenced the creation and design of late-Victorian and Edwardian public parks, and how these park spaces in turn shaped the day-to-day experiences of the children who used them. Recognising that children are social beings who actively engage with and creatively reinterpret social meanings, the experiences of children in the parks have been investigated in conjunction with the wider material culture of childhood at the time. In doing so I have demonstrated how the park landscape formed a significant space for children to construct, negotiate, and perform their complex and nuanced identities. This focus on childhood identity reflects one of the key arguments of this thesis, which is that age is a significant aspect of identity creation at this time, along with class and gender. In investigating this widely overlooked field of inquiry I contend that the park, as a unique institution of the time, facilitated the public expression of childhood in a way that was unprecedented. Prior to this era, children were confined to a relatively limited number of landscapes, designed by adults for adults. A new focus on children as the future of the nation brought about the establishment of institutions created by adults, but with children firmly in mind. The public park was unique in that it made children visible on a hitherto unknown scale. Children in the parks set about reproducing cultural messages prescribed by the landscape, while also creating new meanings and challenging existing ones. In doing so they were able to secure their role at the heart of discourses on health; of the body, the mind, the nation, and the empire.

The structure of this thesis focused on three main themes in thinking about childhood. Chapter 3 explored the way children were thought to have a particular affinity with nature. In literature and other cultural outpourings children represented both the wild and the savage aspects of nature. This was a continuation of a Romantic conception of childhood but also revealed contemporary concerns over health and well being and the future of the nation. The significance of health in children’s activities in the park was also an important aspect of Chapter 4, which examined how play was moralised and how ‘good’ play was deemed important to inculcate children with messages of gender roles, consumerism, health and athleticism. Chapter 5 examined the idea of children having a savage element, which had to be domesticated and civilized through activities in the park. Once again the values of health and morality were significant as children were deemed to be the future of
the nation and empire. In each of these chapters the themes of nature, play, nation and empire, were explored alongside contemporary sources. The thesis examined the design of the landscape in conjunction with historical, pictorial and literary sources, to reveal how these notions of childhood influenced park design and how children were anticipated to act. These chapters also dealt with the way children themselves engaged with the landscape, appropriating some messages and challenging others. Activities, from guided play, viewing animal, plant and historical exhibits, play with toys and other material culture and finally imaginary play, have been considered throughout this work. These acts are shown to represent the ways in which children engaged with the adult material worlds they were exposed to, and how they in turn set about constructing and reproducing cultural meanings and articulating their own notions of identity. In keeping with the thematic approach of this work I will now consider the findings from the three main research chapters in two parts, firstly to state what was learnt from the design of the parks, and secondly what was learnt from children’s activities.

6.1 Results

6.1.1 Design

By the late-Victorian and Edwardian era, when park building reached its zenith, rapid urban growth had left little room for green spaces. Parks built during this time were often constrained by size, not just because there was less land available, but also because the corporations, public institutions, and private benefactors who looked to create them were often competing with developers who had the financial resources to appeal to landowners. In order to overcome this, park building was often presented as a moralistic and philanthropic activity, and landowners were lauded for their charitable contributions, and in some instances acknowledged physically in the material culture of the park. Park design was value-laden and the features included in a particular space were carefully thought out. Some parks, such as Saltwell Park in Gateshead, were planned by well-known landscape designers, while others had to rely on the vision of borough surveyors and parks superintendents. Their decisions were so important that in the case of Whitworth Park, the
man in charge of overseeing the design was sent to Europe and London to study famous parks for inspiration. Where parks were small in size concessions had to be made and so what was included in the layout was especially significant. Children’s playgrounds containing equipment such as swings and see-saws were often left out of the designs in favour of open playing fields, lakes, and wilderness areas. Despite this, those who championed and designed parks were deeply concerned with how children would use and benefit from the space.

The features which park designers felt would most interest children were those linked in some way to nature. Wilderness or wild spaces, offering direct and sometimes unregulated contact with the turf, plants and trees were thought to be particularly important. They were thought to appeal to the animalistic part of children, and park designers tapped into a popular notion of children as pre-evolved creatures occupying these areas as their natural habitats. Access to what G. Stanley Hall called ‘the true homes of childhood’ was thought to be beneficial for the health and development of the child. Furthermore, children were thought to be safest in these wilderness spaces, either in relation to adults or because of the link made between an idealised pre-urban pastoral landscape and the park. Likewise, children were in some ways treated like animals in these bucolic fantasies, as they were expected to share playing fields with grazing animals.¹ Not all animals were freely accessible to children, as parks that included monkeys, birds, and other exotic wild animals were caged as exhibits on display. These creatures were not only offering children a glimpse of the savage, inhuman side of themselves, but also highlighted the difference between the civilized and evolved human and the savage, captured animal, perhaps a stark reminder of what might happen if they themselves did not learn to act in a civilized manner. Misbehaving children were invited to come before the parks committee in a semblance of a court, the intention surely being to warn of future incarceration should they not reform. Alongside the savage rendering of childhood was the innocent, an aspect articulated in the inclusion of water features in the park. Water symbolised purity and innocence and designers utilised this symbol throughout the park, including lakes, natural water features and drinking fountains. Photographers and newspaper journalists frequently linked children with these water features once these parks were open, evidenced

¹ G. S. Hall, Youth, p. 4.
particularly by the countless images of children alongside the various water features in the parks. Water fountains in particular were a visible symbol of the redemptive qualities of the natural child and the park as an alternative to the public house and drinking. This made explicit the links between the temperance movement and the park, but also used children to articulate a reform message, by suggesting that childhood innocence was corrupted by the evils of alcohol, poverty, and immorality.

Park designers did not just want to provide children with spaces in which they could be at home in the park, they also wanted to structure and shape their play. Chapter 4 argued that play was a morally significant set of actions, informed by an idealistic rendering of the culture of childhood. Late-Victorian and Edwardian park designers wanted children to play in specific ways deemed appropriate at the time. The way play was planned, surveyed and regulated reflects the culture of childhood that adults created and attempted to impose on children. ‘Good play’ was athletic, healthy, in the fresh air, surveyed by park wardens and other adults, as well as the children themselves. Where possible playing fields accommodating games and sports, sometimes led by adults, offered space for this idealistic good play to take place. Children’s spaces within the park were highly visible offering adults the potential to supervise and direct children as necessary. Areas where children congregated, such as by the lake edge, were surrounded by benches where adults could observe and regulate where necessary, as well as enjoy the view. Children formed part of this view. Scenes of children engaged in healthy play were described by journalists and social commentators, and were turned into postcards for purchase by adults. The Park Warden was responsible for overseeing the hierarchies of supervision in the park and his role was materially manifested through the provision of a lodge house and locked gates at the park entrances. Accounts from the park committee meetings however suggest that it was parents who were often held accountable for children’s behaviour, even when they themselves were not present. Children also performed countless acts of surveillance on other children, both those in their care, and on peers through the application of rules to play.
Park designers sought to facilitate healthy, moralistic play in children, indulging their ‘savage proclivities’ and shaping their behaviour. They also included features which directed children in understanding and assimilating aspects of nationalism, imperialism, patriotism and citizenship that was peculiar to the era. The park was filled with architecture and planting which referenced Britain’s national and imperial identity, displaying a legacy of Christian and imperial heritage through the associated mix of architectural styles. The park offered a microcosm for children to colonise and conquer in the way that adults were doing across the globe, all the while aiming to educate them and construct patterns of colonial behaviour. The display and exhibition of cultural and natural history in the park engaged children in the colonial experience of homogenising and domination of other cultures. Children were not just seen as the inheritors of this national and imperial legacy, but often as cultural ‘others’ to be civilized. Both taking part in and watching national and imperial spectacles such as royal visits, military drills and athletics could assist the ‘savage’ children to become assimilated culturally in preparation for their future imperial roles. Pageantry and celebration surrounding war memorials in parks further aimed to inculcate in children with the imperial warfare was glorious and heroic and to consolidate the notion that citizenship was not limited to the town or district lived in, but rather extended to the nation and beyond to the empire.

6.1.2 Children’s Acts

Park design reflected the way in which the spaces were designed to construct healthy childhoods, informed by contemporary notions of what children are and what they should become. This thesis is concerned with the materiality of the landscape and so has further acknowledged that parks were spaces where adult understandings and child participants intersect. I contend that children’s activities in the park navigated the material conditions and structures created and designed by adults and reflected attempts to assimilate as well as to reject, or to creatively reinterpret the imposition of adult culture.

Children engaged directly with adult messages of health, consumerism, gender, nationalism and imperialism, enthusiastically taking part in activities aimed at encouraging the adoption of these values. Sports days, gymnastic displays and scouting were highly
visible activities that positioned the child as a spectacle within the park, but also served, along with national and local events, to encourage positive associations between play and health, militarism, and patriotism. Children embraced this association and took part in their own sporting and scouting activities without adult intervention. Child interpretation of the material culture of the park was further influenced and shaped by encounters with materials outside of the park. This was particularly obvious in relation to imaginary play. Children would embody fictional roles to explore and negotiate the landscape. Engaging with the cultural values articulated in the park landscape, as well as the material culture present, they took part in make-belief games of warfare, exploration, and territorial expansion, in the process becoming petty imperialists in training for future roles as soldiers, explorers and colonizers. In doing so they could experiment with non-normative forms of play or else act out adult identities less restricted by adult regulation, which did not extend over imaginary territories. Girls, and indeed sometimes boys, would also play games that embraced the lessons of nurturing, motherhood and domesticity. The dolls they owned were designed to encourage such play, and they were brought into the park to take part in individual and group play. Toy soldiers and model boats were also among play objects brought to the park, both to play with and to compare with those of other children, in an act of conspicuous consumption directly inherited from adult culture. Not all toys were shop bought, but could be repurposed items utilised in play in a similar manner to other toys. Through negotiation within peer groups these toys could be legitimised or rejected, demonstrating how children’s complex identities were a result of ongoing interaction with other children, as well as adults.

Children’s peer groups utilised complex rules to aid in the interaction between children. Games like marbles and five-stones enabled children to demonstrate skill and competitive prowess to the group and through winning and losing toys a child’s value could be made materially visible to the group. Knowledge of the rules of a game or a tune to be sung as it was played denoted belonging to a group and in this way children were constructing and reproducing their own multifaceted cultural identity separate to that of the adults they also interacted with. While class and gender undoubtedly informed these interactions and children’s identities, ability, personal collections and aptitude for a particular game could ultimately influence a child’s position within the social grouping. This
culture could be seen to be in direct conflict with adult culture, particularly as games like marbles could be viewed as gambling, and toys could be won or lost, played with or discounted regardless of their value to an adult. Toys that may have been much loved could be lost, forgotten or damaged either by accident through carelessness, or else deliberately through peer play. Much of this behaviour may have been imperceptible to adults, although the visible material results, such as a lost or damaged toy, or the acquisition of an additional plaything, may have been. Likewise children may have created their own peer hierarchies, but when adults witnessed children playing together they may have been keen to separate their children from those of a different class or gender.

Perversely, acting in a manner deemed subversive to adults may have represented an attempt to assimilate aspects of adult culture. Children collecting birds’ eggs, picking plants or fishing in the park lakes undoubtedly disturbed the adults, who felt that they should feel an affinity with nature. Yet these activities echo the processes of exploration and collection that adults undertook in other countries and appeared to children in the stories they read. Furthermore, the park was presented to them as their space, somewhere that they could enjoy leisure and act away from the constrictions of home and school. Engaging in adult activities such as fishing may well have appeared to them to be a perfectly acceptable activity within the space. These childhood activities reinforced the adult notion of children as savages, especially when considered alongside activities like chasing the sheep grazing in the parks. The removal of animals from the park when they transgressed acceptable behaviours was echoed in the removal of ‘misbehaving’ children by the park keepers, and records of children being brought in front of the park committee were written with the same vigour as the cases of offending animals. Negotiation between children and adults was ongoing and represented the way in which children had to negotiate on a daily basis the adult cultures they operated in, alongside their own peer cultures. The tension between the two coloured the experience of the public park. This was also demonstrated further in the way in which children engaged with the ideas of citizenship, surveillance and regulation. By encouraging children to regulate their own behaviour and that of other children, as well as providing them with adult examples of surveillance, the park also facilitated the means by which children could subvert this message and instead playfully perform the role of a regulating and dominating adults. Examples of children using the park
benches to watch and call out to young courting couples, demonstrate an inversion of the adult cultural message of respectability and modesty. These children creatively interpreted the moral surveillance in the park, a role usually reserved for adult, middle class men. Their interpretation of this role of course differed significantly from adult notions of acceptable behaviour and so drew further regulation.

Sometimes children engaged in behaviour which can be seen as an out and out rejection of adult imposed strictures, and in particular a rejection of hierarchies of authority. This was most notable in relation to acts of vandalism against the Edward VII statue and the refusal to heed the closing time of the parks, a deliberately antagonistic act targeting the park warden and his assistants. Confrontational acts like these were designed to be noticed and often carried out in groups. In these instances children’s peer culture overrode the need to assimilate into adult culture and reflects how children could perceive adult authority as unwelcome and unjustified. Ultimately these actions could not be sustained by children, reflecting of course that adults had the final say. However they perhaps show insight into the ways in which children constructed their own hierarchies and regulation within their peer groups and how at times these were deemed more significant to their everyday experience than that of adults. Not all gestures of subversion were so grand and obvious; instead children committed multiple acts of rebellion on a daily basis through engaging with their own peer cultures that offered alternative forms of authority.

6.2 Contribution and Impact

One of the major strengths of this work is its interdisciplinary nature. Interdisciplinary does not mean that this work is post-disciplinary, rather that it engages with the theoretical and methodological frameworks utilised in a range of subjects including archaeology and history most notably, but also cultural geography, literary theory, anthropology and sociology.² I take as a starting point a consideration of the materiality of the landscape. All of the subjects

mentioned above have engaged in varying ways with the so-called ‘material turn’. Each discipline offers different perspectives on approaching material culture and used together to varying extents can offer a more comprehensive consideration of the experience of the park landscape. Archaeologists have long investigated the relationship between material culture and identity and this thesis has drawn directly on this tradition, investigating the way in which the park was a site for the construction and negotiation of childhood identity. More recent work in archaeology has been critical of a semiotic and textual approach to material culture, and scholars such as Carl Knappett have turned to agency in order to argue that material culture is a product of ongoing material practices and negotiation between social actors. This is of particular use when investigating urban spaces. Cultural geographers Whatmore and Hinchcliffe argue that the term ‘built environments’ as a distinctive area for study detracts from the fact that these spaces are lived in and experienced even as they are built and that their material form is historically contingent and resultant from relational engagements between human and non-human actors. This thesis is situated within this emerging body of work and demonstrates the potential value in investigating past urban spaces as occupied spaces, subject to historically contingent interactions between humans and between humans and the materiality of the landscape.

Childhood studies has also benefitted from an interdisciplinary approach in recent years. This thesis contributes to the body of literature seeking to explore the material worlds of childhood. Agency has once again been useful in seeking to understand the way in which children experienced these worlds. Historian Paula Fass articulates how an engagement with agency acknowledges that children are ‘real participants’, rather than what archaeologist Grete Lillehammer called ‘passive appendages to women’. Work in sociology meanwhile has produced Corsaro’s ‘Interpretive Reproduction’ theory which provides a framework and language for investigating children’s active participation in culture and identity.

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construction. In applying this to the historical material world of the public park, this thesis puts forward a case for an interdisciplinary approach which acknowledges children’s cultural engagement in a material world, and for a consideration of intergenerational transmission of knowledge and meaning. The way in which adults created and experienced the park is subject to a growing body of literature. Despite the obvious cognitive connections between the child and the park, the way in which children experienced and created meaning in the park has been neglected. This research has begun the work necessary to address this gap in our knowledge about public parks and to demonstrate the role that children played in informing the design processes, but also in the ongoing construction of identity, meaning, and experiences in the lived park space.

The diversity of sources which this work utilises is a result of my interdisciplinary approach and is a particular strength of the work, although it is important to acknowledge how this has also been one of the challenges in this investigation. When investigating the past, the ability to look from a position of difference is invaluable. The very ubiquity and familiarity of the public park has perhaps been responsible for the lack of attention paid to its material heritage. By utilising contextualising sources we are able to re-examine the features of the landscape which have become devalued or altered in our eyes. This thesis engages with the material culture of the park but also the material culture associated with it such as the historical literature written about the day to day running of the park, the images produced of the space and those who visited, and the broader material culture of the time. This thesis’ engagement with children’s fiction literature as a unique form of historical source has been as a result of my understanding that children are, as literary theorist Marah Gubar puts it, ‘socially saturated beings’. Children's behaviours and experiences in the park, and the way they engaged with the human and non-human social actors within the space were strongly influenced by their experiences outside of the gates. This of course applies equally to other forms of children’s material culture, however fiction offers a particular insight into the imaginary and creative aspects of children’s engagement with the park landscape which this thesis uniquely acknowledges. Interweaving these diverse sources has

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been complex, however I believe that by attempting to do so, this work offers a more wide-ranging consideration of the childhood experience of the park in relation to the themes discussed.

This thesis contends that children experienced the park landscape materially but also immaterially and ephemerally. Imaginary landscapes transposed onto the physical space of the park offered children unique and deeply significant spaces for the practices of cultural reproduction and identity construction to take place. These imaginary landscapes had a materiality, creatively repurposed from the physical landscape, but one which was fleeting and transient. Anthropologist Morgan Meyer has identified a new direction of scholarship on the materiality of absence. ¹¹ This work begins to demonstrate the significance of what is not there on our material engagement with the world. This thesis contends that the materiality of imagined spaces is an important related direction for the investigation of material worlds, in particular when investigating children’s spaces. In engaging with this notion, this thesis makes an important contribution to the way we view materiality and landscape.

In seeking to directly engage with the lived childhood experience, I have argued that age was a significant category in identity construction, at the time, alongside gender and class. Studies of childhood have often been marginalised through their link to women, domesticity and the home. This has been further complicated by the fact that much of children’s material culture is produced and bought for children by adults, and more easily reveals adults’ values than children’s. ¹² Archaeologists such as Casella and Baxter have embraced this ambiguity and have argued that children negotiate adult cultures through their material practices. ¹³ This thesis takes this approach further arguing that not only do children negotiate adult cultures but they actively contribute to it, as well as to their own peer cultures. Within these competing cultures, the experience of age as a means by which identity is constructed is paramount. The park, as a space for the negotiation and


participation of these cultures is a significant site for identity to be constructed along these lines. I contend that age as a social category should be embraced rather than marginalised as it gives a universal starting point for exploring the experiences of varying social groups. Children in the Late-Victorian and Edwardian era were often depicted culturally as victims of society’s ills, a sentiment that undoubtedly inspired the recent creation of a diverse body of literature on child rescue and child protection. However, by investigating children’s active participation in and negotiation of adult social culture, this thesis marks a step away from victim discourse and towards a more comprehensive investigation of childhood agency.

6.3 Future Directions

This thesis has highlighted a number of interesting avenues for further research. Chapter 5 emphasized the way in which parks could create emotional associations between war and fun. A more in depth exploration of the intangible emotional and sensory aspects of children’s experiences in the park would elaborate more fully on this and would further explore the imaginary and ephemeral experiences of the park which this thesis has already identified and investigated. What archaeologist Sarah Tarlow calls ‘the emotional turn’ is a new and emerging field of research in the humanities and social sciences. As yet a consideration of children’s emotional experiences is lacking from this area of investigation and the public park offers an important prism for this research to be conducted through. Parks were spaces associated with play (as discussed at length in Chapter 4). The emotional significance of this play, both negative and positive, and the impact it had on the broader experience of childhood outside of the park would be a fascinating future research direction. This would also begin to acknowledge the significance of the public park space within the urban experience.

Investigations of public parks have highlighted their significance as ‘remarkable’ institutions of their time. They have been investigated alongside garden courts and private

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15 Taylor, p. 219.
park landscapes.\textsuperscript{16} However much less work has been done which situates parks amongst the other significant urban institutions of the time, such as museums, art galleries, libraries and schools. The role of parks as open-air museums, and the fact that many parks housed museums and art galleries in their grounds would suggest that this would be a fruitful area for investigation. This thesis has been concerned only with the era 1880-1914. This represents the most prolific park building era, however parks continued to be built and used long after this era and continue to be significant today. In recognition of this longevity, future research into the changing experience of childhood in the park would provide further insights into the role of public parks in Britain’s cultural heritage. This direction would complement the current scholarship in museum studies on representations and reactions to the past in the present.\textsuperscript{17} The Whitworth Art Gallery has recently been looking to strengthen the engagement between the gallery and the park space with the purchase of a number of outside sculptures. Furthermore they were closely involved in the Whitworth Park Archaeology and History Project. As part of this project, the Art Gallery hosted a number of drama workshops for primary school children during the excavations.\textsuperscript{18} These children re-enacted scenes from postcards and play acted using the material space being uncovered at the same time. Their actions emphasized how children’s engagement with culture is performative and visible.\textsuperscript{19} The potential for a further experimental and artistic project involving the gallery and the park has the potential to further these insights.

One major contribution of this work has been to demonstrate that ideas of citizenry that underlined park building were more geographically diverse than has been assumed previously. By building on the work begun here and doing further research on additional parks perhaps in the South-West as well as more detailed work in London, it will be possible to explore differences and similarities in park building discourse both regionally and nationally. This of course would allow for a more nuanced investigation of childhood taking into consideration the way that children’s experiences of parks were not universal but were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} For example Gaskell; Taigel and Williamson.
\item \textsuperscript{17} See for example Nick Merriman, \textit{Beyond the glass case: the past, the heritage and the public in Britain} (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991).
\item \textsuperscript{19} Jones, et al., p. 138.
\end{itemize}
also influenced by locality: shaped by the economic, political and social differences across the nation.

6.4 Conclusions

Research for this thesis, and my role as Project Research Assistant in the Whitworth Park Project, has led me to interact with diverse groups of people on the subject of public parks. During these interactions it has become clear to me that public parks continue to be deeply important spaces people living in towns and cities across Britain today. The HLF report ‘Renaissance to Risk’ articulated the pervading sense that these landscapes are a unique aspect of Britain’s cultural heritage and must be protected at all costs. When this sentiment has been expressed to me by members of the public it is striking how frequently children are evoked. Parks continue to hold a socially significant place in childhood, both those lived and experienced today, but also the remembered childhoods of the past which exist in adults’ minds. This thesis has looked at the experience of childhood in the late-Victorian and Edwardian public park, arguing that park landscapes were shaped, defined and negotiated in relation to childhood, and that they formed significant spaces for the ongoing processes of children’s identity creation. This research has helped to shed light on the reasons why Britain’s public parks continue to be so significant today, and how politically, culturally, and socially, children’s experiences matter.
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OS Map 1860s showing the area and surroundings of the Saltwell Side Estates. The landscape is mostly rural, divided up into large estates and still some distance from the urban development of Gateshead in the North which at this time was still concentrated along the river bank. The area coloured green is the approximate area of Saltwell Park. The quarry is noticeable in the top left hand corner of the highlighted area. This later becomes a gravel pit and an impromptu children’s play area. The Dene is called Whinney House Dean in this map and is much less densely planted. Digimap. Coloured by author.
OS Map 1890s showing Saltwell Park and surrounding areas. It is possible to see the spread of urban housing which has by this point reached the park boundaries, particularly where the main entrance is in the top right hand corner. The dense planting of the Dene and along the boundaries of the park is clear. The park layout includes the large lake, the playing field with the bandstand, two bowling greens (one adjoining the house), tennis court and the pavilion. Saltwell Towers, built in 1862 and completed circa 1871 by William Wailes is in the centre of the park, occupied at this time by a tenant. To the immediate north-east of the mansion are the stables and aviaries. Also of note here is the new railway line running to the west of the park. Digimap.
OS map 1910s showing Saltwell Park and surroundings. This image is on a more detailed scale but it is still possible to see the continued urban growth around the park. Much of this housing is small, architecturally plain terracing, although the houses immediately fronting the park are much grander in design. The bandstand has been relocated to the lake island. Other additions include two more bowling greens, a quoits ground, further aviaries and the Boer War memorial. Digimap.
Topographical map of Saltwell Park with scale. The main park entrance in the top right-hand corner is at the highest point of the landscape allowing uninterrupted views over the valley and the fell beyond. The Dene is at the lowest point of the park and visibility from within the space is limited as a result. Digimap. Coloured by author.
Os Map 1840s showing the area of Whitworth Park coloured in green. The area of the park is semirural still and it is possible to see the two large houses which make up the land of the Park. Digimap. Coloured by author.
Os Map 1890s. The Park in the centre of the map is partially laid out. Rapid urbanisation has occurred in the area around the park since the 1840s. The Park is now bordered by dense back-to-back housing. Digimap.
OS Map 1900s. A close-up of the Park area. The design is complete and contains many elements no longer present in the Park such as the lake (with islands), the band stand, observatory, pavilion, shelter, ‘Christ Blessing the Children’ statue and WC’s. This map pre-dates the Edward VII statue and new gates erected in 1912. Digimap.
A topographical map of Whitworth Park based on findings from the Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project geological survey season (2011). Courtesy of the Whitworth Park Community Archaeology and History Project.
Appendix 3: Maps of Greenhead Park

OS Map 1850s. Map showing Greenhead area in Huddersfield. The approximate area of the Park is coloured in green. The town of Huddersfield is relatively small at this time and the area to the west of Greenhead is mostly comprised of small rural estates. Digimap. Coloured by author.
OS Map 1890s. Map of Greenhead Park and surroundings. Huddersfield has developed since the previous map, especially along the railway line. Houses have reached the Park borders although to the west the area remains largely rural. Digimap.
OS Map 1900s. Map showing a close-up of Greenhead Park in the 1900s. The Park design is complete but land is added to it in the 1920s to add facilities for tennis and bowling. The belvedere dominates the landscape in the west corner of the Park and offers views in both directions. Other notable features include the five lakes, bandstand, fountains and grottos. As was the case with Saltwell Park, the houses immediately fronting the Park are much grander than those behind, reflecting how park building impacted on house values. Digimap.
Topographical Map of Greenhead Park. Coloured to show gradients in the park. The undulating land was incorporated into the park design, and the elevation of the belvedere enabled views across the whole landscape. Digimap. Coloured by author.
Os Map 1910s. Close up of Roundwood Park showing the features of the landscape. Of particular note is the fountain at the formal entrance and the viewing platform at the top of the hill. This had previously been the site of the bandstand although this had been moved by this point further down the hill. Digimap.
Topographical Map of Roundwood Park. It is possible to determine the height of the hillock and viewing platform which are significantly higher than the rest of the Park. This hill offered extensive views over London, allowing the visitor to visibly situate themselves in the suburbs away from the urban centre. Digimap. Coloured by author.