

Too Good to be True: Representing Children's Agency in the Archives of Playground Reform

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Children and childhood have become increasingly popular foci in geography and the social sciences more generally.¹ In its effort to foreground children's active role in shaping and utilizing their environment, this literature has tended to concentrate on current or recent childhood settings.² This is due in part to a weighty methodological impediment faced by researchers endeavoring to write child-centered histories—while children's lives may be documented by others, they are rarely producers of their own history. Since the late-19th century, children have occupied a seemingly prominent place in social discourse. Their presence in debates on education, child labor, welfare, child development, parenting, and recreation comprise a rich source of evidence documenting the myriad ways that social institutions strategically construct children and childhood. But while children are the conspicuous subjects of evidentiary material, the degree to which those texts speak of their experience is curbed by the representational politics of the archive.

In response, this paper suggests a methodological framework that strives toward a more inclusive history of children's agency. Drawing on textual evidence from the United States playground reform movement at the turn of the century, I aim to re-examine children's participation in playground production. In particular, I focus on the nature of the young girls' presence in the archive and attempt to explain, with reference to contemporary debates about the education of girls, why their historical character is relatively subdued. Previous work on playground reform has presented the movement as something created *by* adults *for* children, and in so doing has reduced children to passive historical characters who responded to or acted within an imposed framework.³ In an attempt to understand both the discursive containment of children, and provide space for understanding their active role in shaping playground production, I turn to postcolonial studies. This body of literature is conspicuous in its sustained effort to explore and account for historical silencing.

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Postcolonial Methodology

The project of the Subaltern Studies group to rewrite colonial history from the perspective of the subaltern peasant is founded on a theoretical supposition that the seemingly one-sided records of colonial elite (police reports, army dispatches, and administrative accounts) hold within them evidence of subaltern subjectivity. Without the opportunity to document their activities in conventional texts, subalterns have been systematically erased as historical agents; they have been “denied recognition as a subject of history.”⁴ The Subaltern Studies group proposes an alternative reading of colonial history, to be achieved by translating the official narrative of colonialism into a counter-narrative that “rehabilitates” the willful experiences of subalterns. Based on an assumed continuity between colonial recordings of subaltern practices and the lived experience on which such writing is based, Ranajit Guha and others propose that subaltern consciousness can be exhumed and translated into a narrative of resistance.⁵

Literary critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak questions this understanding that consciousness is generatively linked to events and practices. Her critique is directed at the group’s implicit assumption that it is possible to retrieve a pure form of consciousness from the colonial archive. Spivak argues, first and foremost, that to understand consciousness as a fossil that can be excavated to emerge unchanged and able to tell the tale of past events is fallacious. We can never, she argues, “be proper to subaltern consciousness”⁶ as we are working with a consciousness that is “irreducibly discursive.”⁷ Subjects exist for us only as “a theoretical fiction to entitle the project of reading.”⁸ Thus, the discursive quality of the archive precludes transparent access to an objective self. It is not only that voices are written out of history, but that speech itself can never provide a “direct and immediate representation of voice-consciousness.”⁹ All expression, be it gestures or voice, whether written or spoken, share a common distancing from the self and it is only through this representational distance that meaning arises. Given this, Spivak is wary of the group’s desire to lift an explicit, willful subject directly from the archive. This critique does not, however, paralyze historical analysis. While Spivak cautions readers’ willingness to claim a pure rendering of subaltern identity, her alternative notion of the discursive subject—the subject effect—does not halt reading. Instead, it alerts attention to the “narrative containment” of subaltern identity.¹⁰ Rather than searching for authentic, intending actors, historical analysis can profitably seek to understand the contextual discourse that sought to construct, contain, and often silence, historically marginalized subjects.¹¹ In doing so, we are better equipped to understand the nature of historical mediation, i.e. why certain renditions of history appear as they do, and why and how certain groups are absent, quiet, or silenced.

Agency, Archives, and Sites of Childhood

The texts to which I bring these debates come from turn-of-the-century U.S. playground reform.¹² Beginning in the late 1800s, a group of urban reformers, child development specialists, and philanthropic agencies embarked on a mission to provide supervised summer playgrounds in urban centers. Their principal aim was to provide off-the-street recreation facilities for immigrant and working-class children. The documentary evidence that remains provides a rich source of material on reformers' rationale for playground provision, their theoretical understanding of childhood, the tactics they employed in order to fulfill their goals, and detailed descriptions of the daily operation of playgrounds. What remains obscure, however, is how children experienced, and actively contributed to, the production of playground space.

Taking on board the critiques of Spivak, Joan Scott, and Clive Barnett, I do not aim to reproduce an unmediated account of children's experience of playgrounds—as I take this to be theoretically impracticable. My aim, rather, is to approach the texts of playground reform as an opportunity to look for moments of children's agency. The difference is critical. Playground reports consist of detailed descriptions of children's behavior. While these descriptions are generated through a complex discursive framework that obstructs any direct reading of children's subject position, they do offer points of access to talk about children's contribution to the production of space. In this formulation I understand agency to be the actions taken by children that had specific spatial consequences and contributed to the production of playground space. It is the consequential nature of these actions that is recorded in playground reports and thus remains as evidence of children's interests.¹³ This is not to suggest that children's behavior is somehow unmediated or transparent. Just the opposite, the archive establishes the discursive context within which these actions took place. It is only by thoroughly historicizing the construction of children that their behavior, and therefore agency, can be understood. As Scott argues, "subjects do have agency. They are not unified, autonomous individuals exercising free will, but rather subjects whose agency is created through situations and statuses conferred on them."¹⁴ Is it not therefore that historical actions cannot be accessed, but that we cannot take them to stand in for subjectivity, consciousness, or identity.

In the remainder of this paper I explore the possibilities of interpreting children's agency as it was (often inadvertently) defined and described by playground organizers.¹⁵ To do this, I focus on the spatial consequences of children's behavior in order to acknowledge their manifold contributions to the production of playground space. What is immediately evident in these descriptions, however, is the apparent disparity between descriptions of boys' and girls' behavior. While boys are systematically drafted into supervisors' reports as disruptive and unruly, girls' behavior stands in relative shadow. The consequence of taking this rendering at face value would be to prioritize boys' agency over that of girls. To fully appreciate and unpack this contrast, however, it is neces-

sary to turn to the broader discursive context in which childhood, gender, and education coincide to construct boys and girls differently. Following Victoria Bissell Brown's observation that the intersection of discourses on education and gender promoted girls as significantly more compliant with institutional regimes than boys, this contrast becomes comprehensible.¹⁶ It is only by cross referencing the context in which historical evidence is produced with the content of particular texts that we can begin to build a clearer picture of how narrative itself constructs social categories like gender. It then becomes possible to discern why girls might appear as less active in the production of playground space, and ultimately, to expose the inconsistencies in the discursive logic that limits girls' behavior.

Childhood, Gender, and Education

In the late-nineteenth century, the development of public education prompted a heated debate over the relative dangers of coeducation.¹⁷ It was not merely a question of propriety. The combined effect of a perceptible increase in the number of girls completing high school, and a disproportionately high number of female teachers, was thought to be feminizing the school environment and repelling boys.¹⁸ A close analysis of these debates highlights the profound differences in the way gender was understood in boys and girls at the end of the nineteenth century.

Education reformers drew from popular science writings to explain why the dominance of girls and women teachers was driving boys away. Their argument was founded on a popular theory of sex differentiation, proposed in books like *The Evolution of Sex* by Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson, that men and women evidenced fundamentally distinct characteristics due to a physiological difference in cell metabolism.¹⁹ Geddes and Thompson describe male cells as having katabolic properties. Due to their energy-expenditure function, they yield energetic, creative, strenuous, and generally active characteristics. Female cells on the other hand are anabolic, they conserve energy and therefore give rise to "quiescent, passive" women more suited to less demanding tasks.²⁰ This basic biology was used to explain the behavior of every animal, insect, and even plant in the organic world. For example:

The female cochineal insect, laden with reserve products in the form of the well-known pigment, spends much of its life in the mere quiescent gall on the cactus plant. The male, on the other hand, in his adult state is agile, restless, and short lived. Now this is no mere curiosity of the entomologist, but in reality a vivid emblem of what is an average truth throughout the world of animals—the preponderating passivity of the females, the predominant activity of the males.²¹

Education reformers took these findings and applied them to the problem of female domination in high schools. Educators, Brown states, "concluded that girls were staying in school longer than boys because the typical

academic regime was not sufficiently challenging or imaginative to appeal to the masculine mind.”²² She goes on to say that “In the eyes of contemporary observers, then, girls were feminizing the schools, and they were able to do so because the generic American school was every bit as dull and methodical as the generic American girl.”²³

In order to rectify this condition, educators argued for limited segregation of adolescent girls and boys and a gender-specific curriculum. It is noteworthy, however, that throughout their writings, the characteristic differences in boys and girls not only implied an intellectual disparity but also one of temperament, particularly with regard to authority and discipline. J.E. Armstrong states in an article for *The School Review* (1906):

Let us turn now to fundamental differences in intellectual traits. The typical boy of fourteen does not enjoy set tasks, especially those that require patience and memory work. He delights in experiments. He chafes under restraints and often prefers to do things the wrong way, if, in doing so, he can be independent. He is so independent of authority that he is sometimes dismissed from school, and even from home, for disobedience. ... The girl of the same age is more tractable; she will take the advice of her teachers and parents as to what she should do and the way to do it. She is neat and painstaking. She delights in disciplinary studies.²⁴

What I find interesting in this, and similar statements, are the differences in temperament and compliance that, if assumed by teachers, might then mediate their description of children’s behavior and frame our understanding of agency. Armstrong continues to argue, for instance, that girls are clearly not expected to be vocal contributors in the classroom: “Girls are passive and inert in the oral recitation, preferring to let others talk.”²⁵ Girls are generally described as humble and submissive to authority, compared to boys’ tendency to challenge authority and pursue independent thought; girls learn by rote and are better at repetitive tasks, compared to boys’ tendency towards experimentation and original thought.²⁶ “As a rule, both men and women teachers who can hold the discipline of boys and girls would prefer to teach a boys’ class. They say the recitation is more animated.”²⁷ In order to understand the descriptions of behavior documented in playground reports, it is necessary to acknowledge these contextual understandings of education, gender, and discipline.²⁸ If boys were expected and encouraged toward more “animated” behavior, it is likely that their actions would dominate descriptions of classroom and playground life thereby establishing boys as more prominent agents in the production of space. Without recourse to this context, we risk naively reifying children’s behavior in accordance with the discursive framework through which the archive is produced.

Children’s Participation in the Playground

In this section I turn to the records of playground reform. The specific documents I draw from belong to a local philanthropic organization that imple-

mented playground reform in Cambridge, Massachusetts, between 1902 and 1911. Their scheme was part of a larger movement to provide urban playgrounds, organized at the national scale by the Playground Association of America (PAA), that sought to provide “wholesome,” supervised play for immigrant and working-class children. In their effort to uplift and discipline these children, the PAA oversaw the development of supervised playgrounds in over 300 cities across the U.S.²⁹ In Cambridge, a local committee established a network of supervised playgrounds in 1902. Following the national pattern, it devised two types of playgrounds: one for boys over twelve, which would be supervised by a male adult leading boys in baseball and athletics; the other for younger boys and girls of all ages, supervised by a woman who led them in games, industrial work, music, and dance. At the end of the season, each supervisor submitted a report of the summer’s work to the committee, which then compiled an annual report. In comparing the narrative style of reports for the two playground types, boys are effectively inscribed as boisterous and disruptive while girls stand as compliant and dutiful. While the anecdotes that are woven through reports necessarily erect these constructs, on close examination they also enable alternative interpretations of children’s participation in the production of playground space.

In the accounts of play summarized in annual reports, the characterization of children echoes the gender profiles that dominated broader education discourse. Reports describing girls’ activities repeatedly affirm their compliance with the playground regime. They are described as “playing happily,” being “eager to please,” “polite,” and “respectful.” Girls are reduced to quiet caricatures, pleasantly engaged in play—making doll’s houses, sewing, playing ring games, gymnastics, music, and dance. The reports are often comprised of inventories listing games played per day, songs sung, and items made. Thus, a catalog of achievements is offered in place of qualitative descriptions. The few insights that are offered by supervisors merely confirm the ideal of shy and humble girls: “The older girls at first were shy and self-conscious about taking part in the games and folk dances, but when they could slip into them unnoticed they became eager as the little ones.”³⁰

Supervisors of boys’ playgrounds, however, offer a different account. Reports are more animated, describing the antics of fights, thefts, and pranks, performed by “restless and troublesome” boys.³¹ Their “spirited” behavior, while often bemoaned, is simultaneously congratulated as a necessary aspect of the correct development of masculinity. One instructor reports:

One of my bugbears had been the older boys or young “toughs.” They had given us much trouble at the Sargent Yard, although we could turn them out there, as it was our own ground; but on the large fields they had as good a right as we, and might easily make a great deal of trouble.³²

Another instructor, however, argues that despite boys’ mischief, they are better off in the playground than out of it where their many vices (smoking,

swearing, and gambling) could go unchecked. She continues: "I do think it is well worth a teacher's while to put up with the older boys' pranks if they don't overstep those bounds."³³

The prevailing presence of boys in playground reports is perpetuated by the instructors' conviction that boys' "mischievous" and spirited behavior should be indulged as a necessary aspect of boyhood. One instructor regales an example of such behavior. One of the playgrounds had a shelter house where children could take cover in cases of inclement weather. In an effort to convince the instructor that it was necessary to make that move inside, a young boy reportedly climbed a fence and sprinkled the children below from a watering can.³⁴ Supervisors considered the prank nothing more than boyish fun and documented it according to received understanding of boyhood ideals. Falling within the bounds of behavioral expectations, it sits comfortably as anecdotal evidence, not of boys' mischief, but of the containment of mischief by a discourse of boys' roguish nature.

While this disparity of evidence is significant in and of itself, in that children are constructed in gendered terms, it is doubly consequential in the limits it sets for the textual interpretation of agency. The expectation for boys to perform disruptive acts and girls to acquiesce frames our access to children's behavior. Knowing this limit, however, does not obstruct the interpretation of children's activities. On the contrary, it is only through this knowledge that children's activities become legible at all. Within this framework it remains possible to comprehend children's participation in the overall production of playground space. And despite the fact that this form of analysis favors the narrative style reserved for boys, it is also possible to access girls' agency. The following two excerpts offer a brief example of this form of interpretation; the first is taken from a boys' playground, the second from a playground for both girls and younger boys.

Contested Spaces

The committee selected sites for playgrounds in the heart of tenement neighborhoods, close to the children they considered most in need of correction. Their reports clearly logged their commitment to this agenda and might initially attest to the authority of the committee in plotting playground location. However, standing alongside this evidence are indications that children's desires were also a significant factor in establishing a playground site. This is illustrated in the decisionmaking process that established the first all-boys playground.

In 1902, the committee established the first playground on Pine Street, in East Cambridge in the yard of an old settlement house and opened it to all boys and girls.³⁵ By 1903, the committee decided that boys "were something of a problem"³⁶ and hired a male instructor to lead them in one corner of the yard.³⁷ By the summer of 1904, it had banned boys from the yard altogether.³⁸ To compensate for this, the committee selected a new site half a mile away from Pine Street and hired a new male instructor, hoping "to lure the older

boys to that much more suitable playground.”³⁹ This never happened. Although some local boys did attend the new site, it did not attract the boys from the Pine Street area as anticipated. The committee noted:

Although the walk [from Pine Street to the new site] was little over half a mile, our particular gang of boys would not walk that distance to what seemed to them a strange country, but preferred hanging around our gates, giving trouble to our teachers and molesting the smaller children on their way to and from the playground.⁴⁰

As a direct result of this refusal, the following summer the committee searched for an alternative site, eventually settling on one only a quarter of a mile from Pine Street.⁴¹ From this anecdote it is clear that the committee was not the only force deciding the location of playgrounds. Although the narrative adheres to the conventions of contemporary understandings of boyhood defiance, it simultaneously conveys boys’ interests and suggests they were not only heard but were incorporated into the geography of playground location.

Despite the narrative constraints imposed upon the historical character of girls, there are moments of disturbance through which it is possible to trace their contribution to playground production. While it is true that the opportunities for such analysis are more limited, here I describe one occasion where girls’ participation in the shaping of playground policy is implied. It is noteworthy however that when such an event occurs, the collapsing of gender into descriptions of genderless “children” (rather than boys or girls) serves to elide girls’ behavior. This is in part due to the fact that supervisors logged such disturbances only in mixed playgrounds, but this should not necessarily preclude descriptive distinctions between genders. I would argue, therefore, that supervisors’ classificatory preference for “children” allowed them to speak about the disruptive behavior of girls without having to betray the narrative conventions usually reserved for boys.

Supervisors closely monitored playground activities and followed detailed time tables. Each activity had a known goal in terms of character development, and those thought to be mere fun were regarded as dangerously self indulgent. In particular, apparatus like swings and slides were not considered useful, but were tolerated because of children’s demand for them. Henry Curtis of the PAA expresses this disapproval in a play manual from 1915. He notes “there are many physical and moral dangers connected with the swing... . The swing creates no loyalty or friendship, no habit except selfishness.”⁴² But children’s adamant desire to have swings, and their frenzied efforts to enjoy them, stand as testament to their active interests in retaining them as playground apparatus. Miss Rea, an instructor of a mixed playground, and her assistant Miss Kitchin, describe the problems they encountered with swings, and why they did not consider them a valuable aspect of the playground routine:

Mr. Candee announced that the swings were ready to be put up and that they had better make their first appearance when there were as many

other occupations as possible going on in order that there should not be countless numbers swarming about. So when a ball game was underway and the girls were busy sewing, we put them up and Mr. Candee and I tried to regulate the use of them. In spite of the precaution we had taken to avoid unmanageable numbers, children seemed to spring up from the ground.⁴³

Miss Kitchin echoes this:

There was a great deal of pushing in line, squabbling, and cross roughness—poor frantic, scores of children wild for a swing! The conditions were very poor, but considerably better than on Thursday. None hurt today but many hit by others' fists.⁴⁴

While these reports were designed to submit a complaint to the committee about the problem of controlling children around swings, they simultaneously chronicle children's active involvement in the decisions and designs of playground management. Despite the disapproval of instructors, the swings remained. According to the PAA, they were too vital a tool to remove. As Henry Curtis explains, the swing "does not belong in the playground at all. Yet it is one of the main advertisements of the playground to the children, and it is questionable whether the attendance of the children can be secured without it."⁴⁵ Attendance at playgrounds was not mandatory for children. The committee had to balance their interests with those of children, and in cases when those did not obviously coincide, children were able to command a certain authority. In the case of swings, their interests became a significant force in playground policy and remain as evidence to their desires precisely because they ran counter to those of the instructors.

Conclusions

I have attempted here to write a history of playground reform that takes into account children's active involvement in the production of playground space. In doing so I have avoided drawing over-ambitious, and ultimately indeterminable, conclusions about the subjectivity and intentionality of children. Rather, I have used evidence that documents the spatial consequences of children's behavior to trace their participation in playground production, while remaining resolutely aware that the narrative presentation of children's behavior is thoroughly embedded in a broader discourse of gender and discipline. While this discourse inevitably channels our reading towards the agency of boys, and limits our access to girls, it is the only means through which interpretation is possible. Only by knowing how subjects are written into history, can we avoid naively affirming the version of history that is first apparent. Thus I can conclude, not that girls were any less active or forceful in their participation in playground activities, but that they were constructed as sub-

missive and obedient. In drawing these conclusions I do not wish to over imbue children's actions with political intent, nor as both Barnett and James Duncan warn, take these necessarily partial fragments of text to represent disproportionately significant acts.⁴⁶ In spite of the representational politics of the archive, and the limited (and limiting) evidence available, children's contribution remains a significant, if inconspicuous, aspect of playground reform.

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Notes

1. See Stuart Aitken, *Putting Children in their Place* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1994); Virginia Caputo, "Anthropology's Silent 'Others': A Consideration of Some Conceptual and Methodological Issues for the Study of Youth and Children's Culture," in Vered Amit-Talai and Helena Wulff, eds., *Youth Cultures: A Cross-cultural Perspective* (London: Routledge, 1995): 19-42; Sarah L. Holloway and Gill Valentine, eds., *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, Learning* (London: Routledge, 2000); Sarah L. Holloway, Gill Valentine, and Nick Bingham, "Institutionalising Technologies: Masculinities, Femininities, and the Heterosexual Economy of the IT Classroom," *Environment and Planning A* 32:4 (2000): 617-634; Melissa Hyams, "Pay Attention in Class...[and] Don't Get Pregnant: A Discourse of Academic Success Among Adolescent Latinas," *Environment and Planning A* 32:4 (2000): 635-654; Allison James, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout, *Theorizing Childhood* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1998); Berry Mayall, ed., *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced* (London: The Falmer Press, 1994); Jens Qvortrup, et al., *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics* (Aldershot, Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1994); Susan Roberts, "Commentary: What About the Children?" *Environment and Planning A* 30:1 (1998): 3-11; Susan Ruddick, *Young and Homeless in Hollywood: Mapping Social Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Tracy Skelton and Gill Valentine, eds., *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999); Gill Valentine, "Children Should be Seen and Not Heard: The Production and Transgression of Adults' Public Space," *Urban Geography* 17:3 (1996): 205-220; Gill Valentine "Oh Yes I Can.' 'Oh No You Can't.': Children and Parents' Understanding of Kids' Competence to Negotiate Public Space Safely," *Antipode* 29:1 (1997): 65-89.
2. While recent interest in children's geographies has largely avoided historical contexts, within historical geography there has been some interest in educational institutions and the history of geographic education. See Avril M.C. Maddrell, "Discourses of Race and Gender and the Comparative Method in Geography School Texts 1830-1918," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16:6 (1998): 81-103; Teresa Ploszajka, "Moral Landscapes and Manipulated Spaces: Gender, Class and Space in Victorian Reformatory Schools," *Journal of Historical Geography* 20:4 (1994): 413-429; Teresa Ploszajka, "Down to Earth? Geography Fieldwork in English Schools, 1870-1944," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 (1998): 757-774; Felix Driver and Avril M.C. Maddrell, eds., "Geographical Education and Citizenship," special edition, *Journal of Historical Geography* 22:4 (1996): 371-372. For the most part, however, children themselves, and childhood more generally, remain relatively unexamined in these works. I do not make this point to illustrate a critical omission in this

work, but rather to suggest that children's history is methodologically problematic and therefore seldom undertaken.

3. See Don Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organised Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); Cary Goodman, *Choosing Sides: Playground and Street Life on the Lower East Side* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979); Stephen Hardy, "Parks are for People: Reforming the Boston Park System, 1870-1915," *The Journal of Sports History* 7:3 (1980): 5-24; Robert Lewis, "Well Directed Play: Urban Recreation and Progressive Era Reform" in Marc Chenetier and Rob Kroes, eds., *Impressions of a Gilded Age: The American Fin de Siecle* (Amsterdam: Amerika Instituut, 1983): 183-202; K. Gerald Marsden, "Philanthropy and the Boston Playground Movement, 1885-1907," *Social Science Review* 35 (March 1961): 48-58; Heath M. Schenker, "Women's and Children's Quarters in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco," *Gender, Place and Culture* 3:3 (1996): 293-308; Suzanne Spencer-Wood, "Turn-of-the-Century Women's Organizations, Urban Design and the Origin of the American Playground Movement," *Landscape Journal* 13:2 (1994): 125-137. I do not suggest that this work is any less valid because of its focus on the dynamics of playground production and design by adult reformers. Rather, I argue that there is a need to complement this work with methodological alternatives that open up texts to alternative child-centered readings. I also recognize that my own work on playground reform has prioritized the discursive construction of childhood identities over and above an analysis of children's agency, for example, Elizabeth A. Gagen, "An Example to Us All: Child Development and Identity Construction in Early Twentieth-Century Playgrounds," *Environment and Planning A* 32:4 (2000): 599-616.
4. Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).
5. *Ibid.*
6. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," in *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996): 203-235, 217.
7. *Ibid.*, 212.
8. *Ibid.*, 213.
9. *Ibid.*, 222.
10. Clive Barnett, "'Sing Along with the Common People': Politics, Postcolonialism, and Other Figures," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15:2 (1997): 137-154, 147.
11. Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," in James Chandler, Arnold I. Davidson, and Harry Harootunian, eds., *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice and Persuasion Across the Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 363-387.
12. It is important to state that despite my use of postcolonial literature, I do not wish to imply any comparison between the experiences of colonial subalterns and immigrant children in late-19th-century U.S. cities. I do, however, find useful links between their respective archival marginalization and the subsequent methodologies that have been employed by postcolonial studies to interpret their histories.
13. I do not equate these desires with a politicized notion of resistance, nor do I take them to amount to a subject position.
14. *Ibid.*, 383.
15. Both James S. Duncan, "Complicity and Resistance in the Colonial Archive: Some Issues of Method and Theory in Historical Geography," *Historical Geography* 27 (1999): 119-128; and Cheryl McEwan, "Cutting Power Lines Within the Palace? Countering Paternity and Eurocentricism in the 'Geographical Tradition,'" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 23:3 (1998): 371-384, point to the possibility of reconstructing agency from colonial archives where "voices," per se, may be lost.
16. Victoria Bissell Brown, "The Fear of Feminization: Los Angeles High Schools in the Progressive Era," *Feminist Studies* 16:3 (1990): 493-518.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson, *The Evolution of Sex* (London: W. Scott, 1889).
20. *Ibid.*, 29.
21. *Ibid.*, 16-17.
22. Brown, "The Fear of Feminization," 497-498.
23. *Ibid.*, 499.
24. J.E. Armstrong, "Limited Segregation," *The School Review* 14:10 (1906): 726-738, 730.
25. *Ibid.*, 735.
26. *Ibid.*, and J.E. Armstrong, "The Advantages of Limited Sex Segregation in the High School," *The School Review* 18:5 (1910): 339-350.

27. Armstrong, "Limited Segregation," 735.
28. It is evident from the reports I draw from later that the discourse of gender and discipline in high school education Brown identifies also influenced playground reformers' understanding of childhood. It is noteworthy, therefore, that some of the more vocal individuals who contributed to the debate on gender segregation in high schools were also the architects of playground reform. Luther H. Gulick, who authored articles such as "The Alleged Effemination of Our American Boys," *American Physical Education Review* 10 (September 1905): 213-220, was also director of physical education for New York City Public Schools and Playgrounds, an active board member, and first elected president (in 1906) of the Playground Association of America. Likewise, G. Stanley Hall also contributed to education debates, publishing articles such as "Feminization in School and Home," *The World's Work* 16 (May 1908): 10237-10244, while also enthusiastically supporting the playground movement. Hall's theoretical understanding of child development was the principal framework adopted by playground reformers. His two-volume work *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (New York: Appleton and Co., 1904) was widely cited in playground manuals.
29. Helen Jackson Cabot Almy Papers 1899-1910, folder 8, "Playground Facts" leaflet number 2, published by the Playground Association of America (1909), Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
30. Mother's Club of Cambridge Papers 1881-1942, box 1, folder 1, Annual Report (1909): 5, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
31. Mother's Club of Cambridge Papers 1881-1942, box 1, folder 1, Pine Street Annual Report (1904): n.p., Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
32. Helen Jackson Cabot Almy Papers 1899-1910, folder 4, "The Development of Boys' Playgrounds in Cambridge" report by Mrs. Almy (November 1908): 10, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
33. Helen Lawrence Brooks Papers, 1822-1985, folder 3, Annual Report (1910): 7, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
34. Mother's Club of Cambridge 1881-1942, box 1, folder 1, Annual Report (1907), Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
35. Mother's Club of Cambridge 1881-1942, box 1, folder 1, Pine Street Annual Report (1902), Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
36. Helen Jackson Cabot Almy Papers 1899-1910, folder 4, "The Development of Boys' Playgrounds in Cambridge," report by Mrs. Almy (1908): 1, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
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40. *Ibid.*, 2.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Henry S. Curtis, *The Practical Conduct of Play* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915): 80-81.
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44. Helen Lawrence Brooks Collection 1822-1985, folder 218, "Report for Cambridge Field," Miss Kitchin (1910): 19, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.
45. Curtis, *The Practical Conduct of Play*, 81.
46. Barnett, "Sing Along with the Common People," and Duncan, "Complicity and Resistance in the Colonial Archive."