

**PERCIEVING MINDSCAPES: AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF THE  
TRANSNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
IN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES, 1852-1894**

by

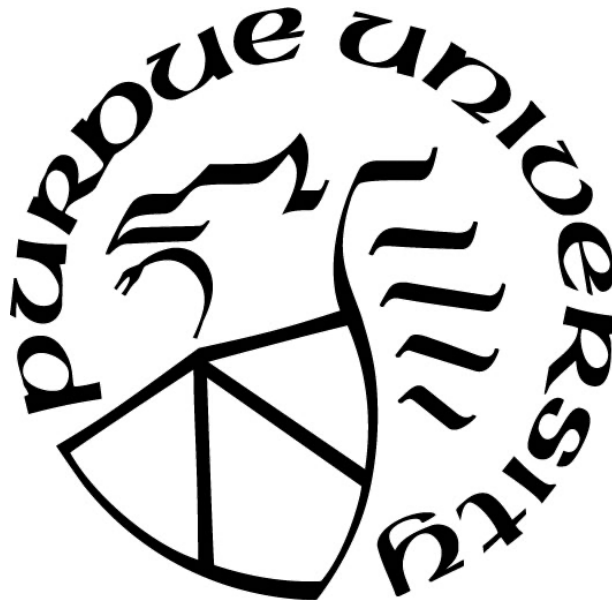
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*To my brothers*

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## **ABSTRACT**

“Perceiving Mindscapes: An Intellectual History of Transnational Development of Landscape Architecture in France and the United States, 1852-1894” traces the landscape architecture thought of several key individuals as their thoughts occurred in a network of park development between France and the United States. This study contributes to the history of parks, constructed, or preserved, and their perceived impacts on humanity. Specifically, I examine the writings of Frederick Law Olmsted, Calvert Vaux, Adolphe Alphand, Édouard André, and Maurice de Vilmorin. All landscape architects and Vilmorin, a horticulturalist, wrote professing a proclivity to aiding city dwellers (directly or indirectly) by designing urban parks for recreational use. I contend that these landscape architects designed urban parks with their perceived notions of what city dwellers may have needed or wanted, without the ability of knowing or addressing these needs or wants. By tracking these designs internationally, I note how French and American landscape architects enabled one another to rapidly develop landscape architecture around the concepts of internal ailments, aesthetics, pragmatism, and longevity.



## INTRODUCTION

“...A tendency to a different style in the preparation of pleasure grounds has been growing wherever the climate admits of its being adapted with success. The changes made in the plan of the Bois de Boulogne under the late Empire, those also in the Bois de Vincennes, the Parc de Monceau and other grounds in France, and the plan of a new park at Brussels, all show progress in this direction...”<sup>1</sup>

-Frederick Law Olmsted, *Report of the Landscape Architects and Superintendents*, 1871

In his reports, plans, and letters, Frederick Law Olmsted displayed considerable awareness for the transnational network that transformed the art of city parks. In Olmsted’s notations of France as an ally in the new park-making agenda in megacities, he became a conduit for information to flow freely between France and the United States. In his complementary statement shown above, Olmsted referred to three works of the landscape engineer, Adolphe Alphand. Those works are the Bois de Boulogne, the Bois de Vincennes, and the Parc de Monceau. Of these, the Bois de Boulogne served as Olmsted’s first French inspiration, illuminating new ideals of landscape architecture to be met in his design of Central Park. Yet, Central Park only represented the beginning of Olmsted’s career and his relationship with France continued throughout his professional development and efforts in international cooperation in the making of city parks.

This thesis tracks the transnational conversation between France and the United States about landscape architecture in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In the 1850’s, a movement began in France and the United States to implement city parks. Alphand and Olmsted pursued park designs to alleviate perceived mental concerns in each respective country. Alphand’s successor and Olmsted’s French contemporary, Édouard André developed the field of landscape architecture as an art and science, representing the higher design standards of landscape architecture internationally. In culmination of transnational efforts to advance and establish landscape architecture, both Olmsted and André worked together in the design of Jackson Park in Chicago, showcased at the American Columbian Exposition of 1893. The landscape architects, Alphand,

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<sup>1</sup> David Schuyler and Jane Turner Censer, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI: The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company, 1865-1874*. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 411.

Olmsted, and André aimed for similar overarching goals of bettering the lives of urban dwellers of diverse socio-economic backgrounds through the creation of an accessible and picturesque city park.

The rationale for this study generally revolves around how these pioneers conceived of a modern metropolis that assembles itself in such a way to improve the quality of lives within the city limits. This speculation inquires of the very human necessities in a deeply manufactured world, and therefore opens the opportunity to understand if these perceived necessities transcend nation-state boundaries. In essence, were the landscape architects of France and the United States answering the same human needs that would transcend any country line? Of course, some of these human needs would cross any country line due to humans being the lowest common denominator. A more interesting question illuminating the intricacies of transnational conversation is: did political and cultural undertones find their way across country lines in the form of landscape aesthetics? And if those undertones did or did not transfer countries, did the knowledge of cultural landscape design lead to more rapid development in one or both countries?

Intersecting this study is the historiography on the Haussmannization of Paris, the total reconstruction and redesign of Paris, overseen by Georges-Eugène Haussmann from 1853 to 1870 under the reign of Napoleon III. There are several works that examine crucial undertakings of the Haussmannization process pertaining to environmentalism in France, such as Haussmann's *Memoires du Baron Haussmann* and Alphand's *Les Promenades de Paris*.<sup>2</sup> David Pinkney's *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* covers the rebuilding of Paris, by exploring the writings and illustrations of Parisian city planners. Pinkney argued that the transformation of the city likely could not have happened in a government of less authoritarianism than the Second French Empire under Napoleon III.<sup>3</sup> A similar work, *Paris Reborn: Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann, and the Quest to Build a Modern City* by Stephanie Kirkland's focal point emphasized Haussmann's destructive process in re-designing the city of Paris.<sup>4</sup> Pinkney's work acknowledged the despotism of Haussmann's reconstruction of Paris but deepened his argument by including the domino effect Haussmann's work began in other cities in the United States. Pinkney relayed, "the city planners

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<sup>2</sup> *Memoires du Baron Haussmann*. (Paris, 1890-1893), 557 and Adolphe Alphand. *Les Promenades de Paris* (Paris, 1867-1873).

<sup>3</sup> David H. Pinkney. *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958).

<sup>4</sup> Stephanie Kirkland, *Paris Reborn: Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann, and the Quest to Build a Modern City*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013).

of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, notably Daniel Burnham, Charles McKim, Frederick Law Olmsted, and other associated with the City Beautiful Movement owed much to Louis Napoleon and Haussmann.”<sup>5</sup> Richard Hopkins’ made a complementary statement in *Planning the Greenspaces of Nineteenth Century Paris*. He wrote, “The implications of the alterations to the Parisian cityscape reach far beyond the particular world of nineteenth-century Paris.”<sup>6</sup> Hopkins utilized Parisian greenspaces as a mirror to showcase changing views on urbanization, governmental structure, and health in France. By noting the transnational impacts of the Haussmannization process, Pinkney and Hopkins’ lead to questions relating to the global networks of the “City Beautification Movement” that began in France.

The French environmental historiography overarchingly considers the transitions from monarchical gardens or hunting lands into public parks or museums. *Natural Interests: The Contest over Environment in Modern France* by Caroline Ford focused on environmentalism in France. Ford argued that conservationism primarily drove French environmentalists, while preservation ideals influenced American environmentalists more than the French. By exploring this topic, Ford utilized examples of landscapes, such as the grounds at Fontainebleau which transformed from monarchical hunting grounds into a historic landscape.<sup>7</sup> In *La ville végétale: Une histoire de la nature en milieu urbain*, Charles-François Mathis and Émile-Anne Pépy showed an overview of any use of nature in in French culture, such as plants utilized in festivals or balcony gardens that appeared in nineteenth century Paris.<sup>8</sup> Ford, Mathis, and Pépy indicated the adaptability of nature in France to be transformed and utilized in a variety of different manners, following governmental changes and cultural needs.

Transitions of nature in France is best highlighted in Emma Spary’s *Utopia’s Garden: French National History from the Old Regime to Revolution*, which explored the evolution of the *Jardin de Roi* to the *Museum d’Histoire Naturelle*. The *jardin* originated as a medicinal garden for Louis XIII of France in 1626, and as the institution matured, it harnessed a strong system of patronage to survive. During the political turmoil of the French Revolution of 1889, the naturalists

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<sup>5</sup> Pinkney. *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris*, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Hopkins. *Planning the Greenspaces of Nineteenth Century Paris*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015), 12.

<sup>7</sup> Caroline Ford. *Natural Interests: The Contests over Environment in modern France* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Charles François Mathis and Émile-Anne Pépy. *La ville végétale: Une histoire de la nature en milieu urbain* (Champ Vallon, 2017).

of the *jardin* into the *museum*, affirming the institution as a public space in Paris, serving a wider demographic of people.<sup>9</sup> This transition parallels the transition in park design in France during Alphand's and André's design influence. Alphand diversified park design by moving away from the traditional monarchical designs of France, and towards a new design reflecting the Second French Empire. Spary's work is a precursor to this occurrence, as the *jardin* moved away from its monarchical roots to survive. Both forms of nature, the *jardin* and Alphand's parks evolved past their monarchical features to support newer forms of French government, showcasing the adaptability of nature in France.

There are articles that cover some specific details and intentions of Olmsted by analysis of his personal and professional writings and park plans. The *Greensward Plan* by Olmsted and Vaux and Olmsted's letters to Daniel Burnham and Charles Codman during the World's Columbian Exposition feature as important documents that can clarify Olmsted's thoughts on park design. The *Greensward Plan* and Olmsted's letters correspond to the making of Central Park in New York and Jackson Park in Chicago, respectively.<sup>10</sup> Jason Kosnoski delved into the park design of Central Park in "Democratic Vistas: Frederick Law Olmsted's Parks as a Spatial Mediation of Urban Diversity." Kosnoski explored how the cultural undertones of the United States government affected Olmsted's land designs in Central Park in New York. He argued the spacious atmosphere of the park grounds allowed for freedom of movement, promoting diversity among people who visit the park.<sup>11</sup> David Schuyler examined the design of Jackson Park in Chicago in "Frederick Law Olmsted and the World's Columbian Exposition." Schuyler argued that Olmsted influenced the decision of utilizing Jackson Park as the site for the exposition, designed a large portion of the landscape for the exposition, and made his landscape to oppose the extreme visual of the "White City" theme of the exposition.<sup>12</sup>

The history of urban development in environmental history focuses on the sprawling narratives of large cities, covering extended periods of development over expansive land in the

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<sup>9</sup> Emma Spary. *Utopia's Garden: French Natural History from Old Regime to Revolution* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> For reference to these materials, see Charles E. Beveridge and Davis Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III: Creating Central Park, 1857-1861* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press) and *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI: The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company, 1865-1874*. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> Jason Kosnoski "Democratic Vistas: Frederick Law Olmsted's Parks as Spatial Mediation of Urban Diversity." *Space and Culture* 14, no. 1 (2011): 51-66.

<sup>12</sup> David Schuyler, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the World's Columbian Exposition," *Journal of Planning History* 15, no.1 (2016): 3-28.

creation of a cityscape. *Gotham Unbound: The Ecological History of Greater New York* by Theodore Steinberg articulated the struggles between New York City and the natural world. In looking at New York through an environmental lens, Steinberg considered the construction of the city and the subsequent environmental drawbacks generated.<sup>13</sup> Noting ecological damage as a negative effect in relation to industrialization is an intuitive argument to contend. However, Steinberg's noted his work is about "the struggle between New York and the natural world."<sup>14</sup> This statement relayed problematic relations between humanity and the natural world, partially due to the lack of clarity it presented. "New York" can refer to the industrialization or urbanization of the geographical area that currently exists as New York City. In either case, Steinberg critiqued the relation of the concentration of humanity in an urban center while utilizing industrialization for the course of economic growth with the "natural world."

Steinberg's usage of the phrase "natural world" presents its own set of problems. Does human intervention of industrialization and urbanization equate an "unnatural world?" By disconnecting the city of New York from the natural world, Steinberg perpetuated the idea that humanity is estranged from the environment instead of living interconnectedly. He upheld the dichotomy of "natural" and "unnatural," with the latter having any form of human intervention that becomes perceived as interfering and therefore harming the "natural world." This division between the natural and unnatural world has promoted the use of the term "wilderness", referring to areas of "untouched" land such as National Parks in the United States. William Cronon confronted the problematic vernacular in his article *The Trouble with Wilderness of Getting Back to the Wrong Nature*. The article argued that there is nothing natural about wilderness, which survives only as an unnaturally preserved space in the environment.<sup>15</sup> By following the line of thinking that postulates that human intervention with the environment is unnatural with negative consequences, Cronon reveals that the obvious answer to this problem is for all humans to kill themselves.<sup>16</sup> That particular outcome could be considered unappealing for most humans, and it would also absolve humanity from any further negative environmental impacts. Cronon clarified through his article that placing an over-differentiation between humanity and nature is harmful,

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<sup>13</sup> Theodore Steinberg, *Gotham Unbound: An Ecological History of Greater New York*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi.

<sup>15</sup> William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-28.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

because it artificially divorces the two concepts, further estranging humans from nature. Therefore, it is not necessarily the inclusion of industrialization and urbanization in human society that provides humanity's estrangement from nature but the intellectual inquiries on the human/nature relationship that has encouraged this furthering of division in the relationship.

Cronon's further critiques the estrangement of humanity and nature in the environmental historiography in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. He argued that inner Chicago and the outside agricultural grounds surrounding the city act as an intrinsically connected system; differentiation between the city and the environment is perceived, not real. Cronon focused on the networks between the urban market and the agricultural supports in surrounding rural areas. By considering networks, Cronon explored the products that rural and urban peoples traded in the Chicago areas, including grain, lumber, and meat.<sup>17</sup> *Nature's Metropolis* featured as the antithesis to *Gotham Unbound* in the environmental historiography. Steinberg presented humanity and nature as opposing forces, while Cronon marked the two as organically linked and interdependent.

Cronon's two works opposed Steinberg's *Gotham Unbound*. Steinberg negatively perpetuated the division between humanity and nature. However, the two forces are linked in an eternal and necessary relationship, evolving in a non-linear fashion. Humanity is not set in a war with nature, humanity is set in war with humanity. Steinberg attempted to utilize a critique on capitalism to understand humanity's relation with nature but failed to fully address the complexity of the relationship. Marx and Engels wrote in *The German Ideology* "the division of labor inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence the separation of town and country and a clash of interests between them."<sup>18</sup> In the development of a nation, groups of people will become diametrically opposed. In a basic sense, the upper class and lower class will develop differing values and will be set in a struggle with one another. Aptly this struggle will utilize land as a battleground, agricultural ground or the ground on which cities are built. With this understanding, Steinberg attempted to create a binary between humanity and nature. This is incorrect, humanity is engaged in a triangular relationship with itself and land, expressly and altruistically attempting to save all parties while at the same time strangling them over differing value systems.

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<sup>17</sup> William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology: Parts I and III* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 8.

Olmsted presents as a perfect example of an expressive and altruistic individual, who lacks full understanding of the lower class and the environment he sought to aid. Simplistically, this thesis presents a critique on upper class intellectualism and idealism in park-making and design, while constantly noting these landscape architect's altruistic motivations. Demonization of these individuals would be harmful and unhelpful, further dividing nature and humanity. I contend that Olmsted, Alphand, and André sought to aid city dwellers by providing them the landscapes that would alleviate suffering that they perceived of city dwellers facing, though not knowing or adhering to actual city dwelling struggles. In a transnational context, these three landscape architects rapidly developed landscape architecture around concepts of internal ailments, aesthetics, pragmatism, and longevity. To explore these concepts, this thesis is arranged in three thematic chapters.

Chapter one focuses on Olmsted's development of Central Park and Prospect Park with his partner Calvert Vaux. Olmsted and Vaux's design of both parks derived influence from Alphand's Bois de Boulogne, which they both site in their plans for the parks. The French park represented an evolved version of the nation's history in gardening, a less strict and more natural style. Alphand organized his parks in a naturalistic format while still incorporating older French styles. Olmsted and Vaux integrated these French styles of early landscape architecture into their design layouts for both Central Park and Prospect Park. Namely, Alphand's drives, walkways, and tree organization affected Olmsted and Vaux's designs of their respective parks. The three architects, Alphand, Olmsted, and Vaux all show through their designs and writings their concerns for the mental well-being of city dwellers.

Chapter two traces the development of landscape architecture as an artform through Olmsted and André's writings from the 1850s through the 1880s. Both architects simultaneously affected one another's designs and even their own interpretation of their craft. Olmsted professionally developed himself while working on a variety of projects, apart from city parks. These include schools, universities, and care centers. This experience widened his perspective on the potential needs of his park visitors, which translated into new concerns for city parks. Ultimately, he gained a value for creating parks that are accessible, but also double as aesthetically relevant. Olmsted's focus on accessibility affected André who prided the United States landscape architects on sidewalks and bridges that continued above city streets, making portions of the park accessible to each other. André also furthered Alphand's own designs, making his landscape more

naturalistic in appearance. Olmsted and André developed the discipline of landscape architecture in unison, creating parks that carried a naturalistic aesthetic while remaining accessible to people.

Chapter three narrates the international cooperation between Olmsted, André, and Maurice d. Vilmorin, a French horticulturalist, in the making of Jackson Park for the American Columbian Exposition. Olmsted ventured back to France in hopes of achieving aid from André for the exposition and to teach his young apprentices, Phillip Codman and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., about French landscape architecture. André did not come to Chicago, but Vilmorin was sent in his place to oversee André's designs implemented in Jackson Park. Vilmorin also organized much of the horticultural exposition, adding to the overall quality of greenspaces included in the exposition. The display of Jackson Park and the greenspaces at the American Columbian Exposition showcased international efforts in landscape architecture while also serving as an event to teach a newer generation.

Landscape architecture features a monumental inclusion in the industrialization of modern cities. Ideally, they offer an easily accessible space to city dwellers so they can meet their internalized needs. With the sources available, notes and thoughts of the landscape architects Olmsted, Alphand, and André, it remains difficult to know what internalized needs these city dwellers possessed. Instead, what can be ascertained is what the landscape architects perceived of their park-goers needs. It is highly possible and even probable that their park designs negatively impacted the very class of people they sought to aid. Perception factors in as an integral element to this story. Nineteenth century landscape architects in France and the United States perceived they designed parks to aid urban dwellers of diverse socio-economic background, though in their ability to design they displayed deficiency of understanding for people of differing backgrounds from themselves.



## **CHAPTER 1. THE URBAN DWELLER'S GARDENS: A TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY OF FRENCH TRANSITIONS AFFECTING URBAN PARK DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES, 1852 - 1876**

After visiting London in 1859, the American landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) journeyed to Paris in continuation of his observance of European parks, or “pleasure grounds” as he sometimes preferred to call them. Upon arriving, he became acquainted with Adolphe Alphand (1817-1891), the architect of the Bois de Boulogne, a Parisian park newly designed in 1852 through 1855. The two landscape architects shared information and Alphand instructed one of his engineers to accompany Olmsted on his visit to the Bois de Boulogne, Alphand’s only finished constructed park at the time. While in France, Olmsted examined the parks of Versailles, St. Cloud, and the Bois de Vincennes. Despite these arrangements and travelling, none of the parks fascinated Olmsted as much as the Bois de Boulogne. In his short time there (of less than a month), he made eight trips to the park, observing the details of walkways, scenery, and plant arrangements. Those detailed images in Olmsted’s mind would reverberate throughout his park designs in New York, during the years of 1859 through 1876. He frequently cited the Bois de Boulogne in his personal and professional letters as if it were the genesis of urban parks, altering between critiquing or commending the designs of his French architectural counterpart he met years prior.<sup>19</sup>

The French and American urban park movement of the 1850’s through the 1890’s occurred synchronously and as a reaction to the perceived mental woes of the nation’s prospective cities. Alphand and Olmsted both wrote fervently of their concerns on the mental and physical health of urban dwellers. However, their specific concerns diverged from there. Alphand operated under a transitional government, and sought a salve for potential tyranny. Olmsted subsequently and possibly inadvertently transferred this French revolutionary trauma into his New York Park designs. Along his underlying tyrannical concerns, he consciously implemented designs for the prevention and intervention of mental ailments through his city parks and grounds for insane asylums.

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<sup>19</sup> Charles E. Beveridge and Davis Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III: Creating Central Park, 1857-1861* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 234-235.

This work uses a blended approach of transnational and comparative histories of park design in France and the United States from the years 1852 to 1876. More specifically, this study focuses on the connections between the park movements between Paris and New York State through the thematic lens of tyrannical fear and mental ailments as catalysts for building the parks. A comparison will also be drawn between the governmental transitions and mental fatigue that Alphand and Olmsted consciously grappled with in their writings. I contend that Alphand designed the Bois de Boulogne with imperialist undertones. Olmsted, by utilizing this French park and Alphand's writings as a guide, imported similar imperialist designs while differing from Alphand in his desire to prevent and intervene in perceived cases of mental ailments. In doing so, this reveals the imperialistic, transnational, and medical underpinnings of modern parks that people utilize as a means of recreational time.

This is not an attempt to survey all the parks designed by Alphand and Olmsted. The Parisian park that will be analyzed here is the Bois de Boulogne, because Olmsted refers to it frequently in his letters. In New York State the parks explored will include Prospect Park (designed from 1867-1873), Central Park (designed from 1857-1876), and the grounds of the Buffalo Insane Asylum (designed in 1871). This chapter serves to illuminate the connections and disconnections between park design in Paris and New York State.

The Parisian park movement began as a part of a larger systematic change under the authoritarian regime of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (1848-1870). Napoleon III began his administration of France as the president in 1848 before assuming the emperorship in 1852. Once emperor, Napoleon III sought out an energetic man that displayed devotion to himself and the French Empire to renovate Paris. He found Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809-1891) who unquestioningly took on the task of orchestrating both the destruction and the reconstruction of the historical Paris. This renovation, known as the Haussmannization of Paris, operated as a complete reconstructing and industrialization of the city. Prior to Haussmann, Paris had been considered the dirty city, and its lack of industrialization harmed it as a trade center.<sup>20</sup> The streets, sewer systems, buildings, railways, and parks all received attention from Haussmann. In many ways, the systematic renewal and maintenance Haussmann imparted on Paris was overdue. However, during

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<sup>20</sup> Stephane Kirkland, *Paris Reborn: Napoleon III, Baron Haussmann, and the Quest to Build a Modern City*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013), 23.

his massive undertaking of Paris, historical neighborhoods were destroyed, and people were unceremoniously displaced by his machinations.<sup>21</sup>

Under a hierarchal regime, Haussmann hired Alphand to renovate the parks of Paris. An engineer, Alphand pragmatically knew how to reconstruct the parks in line with his superiors wishes and ideals. However, Alphand personally displayed in his writings a sensitivity towards the people of Paris and their experiences under different French governments over the years. Between 1870 and 1873, Alphand published *Les Promenades de Paris* which gave a comprehensive overview of historical gardens in Asia and Europe. The work also includes Alphand's plans for the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes, while also tracking their potential budgets. *Les Promenades de Paris* is the closest journalistic entrée discussing the development of the city parks of Paris, but Alphand's opinion on this development acted as a derivative of his superiors: Haussmann and Napoleon. In keeping with their desires for the new French empire, Alphand artistically and strategically made parks that won his superiors' approval.

In the United States, Olmsted operated from a less hierarchal chain of command, and there were three people who could have potentially designed Central Park. The first person hired for this undertaking, Egbert Viele, envisioned an alleviation the drainage issues of New York City by creating more natural waterways.<sup>22</sup> After the 1857 presidential election, the legislation concerning the Central Park commission became Republican-controlled.<sup>23</sup> To Viele's disapproval, the Board of Commissioners of Central Park chose Olmsted and Vaux to design the park. More of a writer than an engineer or architect, Olmsted lacked the practical experience that would have made him the obvious choice. Nonetheless, his odd promotion to superintendent of Central Park in 1858 marked the beginning of his landscape architectural career. His partner for Central Park, Calvert Vaux, had training in architecture and helped Olmsted secure his position at Central Park. The two later created the Olmsted, Vaux, and Company landscape firm in 1862 that would finish the designs of Central Park. Olmsted and Vaux both carried European influence into their park designs. Olmsted displayed his knowledge and fondness for European (specifically French, but also English) culture in his letters to the Commissioners of Central Park as well as his many personal

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>22</sup> Theodore Steinberg, *Gotham Unbound: An Ecological History of Greater New York*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 86.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 87.

correspondences with family, friends, and potential enemies.<sup>24</sup> Vaux described a similar desire to replicate a high society of Europe in America through architecture in his work, *Villas and Cottages*.<sup>25</sup> The two landscape architects worked in tandem to consciously and subconsciously create European-flavored urban park in the United States.

## 1.1 Transitional Park Design in France

The urban park movement, beginning with Alphand in 1852, was fueled by three specific insecurities that the newly formed French Second Empire faced. The first, Alphand's historical memory of France, incorporated the rapid cycling of different governments including the Bourbon and July monarchies, two republics, and two Napoleonic empires. This historical memory in Alphand expressed itself as a need to transition styles of parks to reflect new modes of government. The second: Alphand worked in a hierarchal regime as part of an empire and received pressure from both Haussmann and Napoleon III. The third: I contend that as a consequence of the first two dilemmas, Alphand struck a compromise with all his stressors; he designed an imperial park, fulfilling the desires of his superiors and answered his own fears of a monarchical or revolutionary France.

Landscapes operate as an alternative realm for people, rather than a simple practical visual experience. The relationship between people and their landscape occurs in several stages. The first, people take in their surroundings made of their own cultures, economics, and natural settings. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels wrote, "From the start the "spirit" is afflicted with the course of being "burdened" with matter."<sup>26</sup> This process functions to allow a person to create their own personal mindscape. The second, once a person creates their mindscape, when confronted with nature, they combine the two, forming landscape, which at this point still only exists in the person's mind. In his 1995 work, *Landscapes and Memory*, Simon Schama argued that humans have created the construct of landscape in their minds, and that it is distinct from the concept of nature. He then specifies that humans do this by projecting their "inherited traditions" onto nature

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<sup>24</sup> For reference to these letters, see Beveridge and Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III* and David Schuyler and Jane Turner Censer, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI: The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company, 1865-1874*. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 415.

<sup>25</sup> Calvert Vaux, *Villas and Cottages. A series of designs prepared for execution in the United States* (New York (State): Harper & Brothers, 1864), 28.

<sup>26</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology: Parts I and III* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 19.

and that this makes the landscape.<sup>27</sup> After the second phase, landscape architects are allowed a third phase, the privilege of manipulating a space in aspects of nature to fit the landscape created from their mindscape. It is the practical and manipulative side to the second stage of landscape thought. Anyone not involved in landscape design can only achieve the second stage of landscape thought. At the same time, landscape architects can only perceive park-goer's mindscapes.

Alphand's trouble with historical memory began when his vision of potential Parisian parks took on multiple forms. In the sixty years prior to Alphand's construction of the Bois de Boulogne in 1852, France saw multiple revolutions and governments. These began with the first French Revolution in 1789, which included the particularly bloody Reign of Terror caused by widespread paranoia among the politicians.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, France started on a process of short-lived governments, including an empire under Napoleon I, followed by two monarchies, and a second republic. Alphand wrote sensitively about these issues, personally and out of concern for how his parks would be interpreted by people. He wondered what visitors to his park would project onto the natural space he provided them, because France could be seen as an empire, monarchy, or republic.

Alphand showed his cultural awareness and a similar nuanced understanding of landscape as Schama in his introduction and history section of his work, *Les Promenades de Paris*. Alphand conducted historical reviews and meditations in this section on Asia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Medieval Europe.<sup>29</sup> This listing reveals a non-Eurocentric path Alphand chose to study garden designs. His comments on Greece indicate an understanding of cultural input into manipulation of nature. He wrote on Greek gardens, "their mythology also reveals their delicate feeling, this pious love of nature."<sup>30</sup> Alphand's comprehension of Greek gardens revolved around their piety, and how these religious undertones played out in Greek people's construction of their gardens. Alphand continued to write, "we must resort to the rules of perspective, and deal with the nature in front of our eyes."<sup>31</sup> In this comment, Alphand clarified his position on gardening (or in his case park-design). Alphand knew that people determined what their nature would look like through "the rules of perspective", which Alphand indicated in his previous comment came from culture.

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<sup>27</sup> Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 12.

<sup>28</sup> For further readings on this topic and concept see, Marisa Linton, *Choosing Terror: Virtue, Friendship, and Authenticity in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Adolphe Alphand, *Les Promenades de Paris* (Paris, 1867-1873), i-x.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, v.

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

Mythology impacted the Greek's perspective in changing their nature, to match their external perceptions with their internal imagery of the divine. Alphand's writings on historic gardens, such as the Greeks, indicate his comprehension of the relationship between peoples' internal imagery created by culture and how that imagery interacts with their physical environment.

Alphand's cultural considerations in France revolved around French governmental politics and a desire to evolve French park design. He confessed anxiety for the potential return of the French monarchy. He specifically noted, "It would be better, in this case (France), for the construction to adapt a less tyrannical ornamentation to it than the classical style [of France]"<sup>32</sup> He responded to his immediate need by creating a binary between the traditional French and English styles of parks. Alphand called the traditional French style, *les jardin reguliers*, to indicate that the gardens severely ordered form.<sup>33</sup> Alphand both described and critiqued the *style regulier*. He wrote, "the garden formed by straight alleys, covered with treillised arbors; barrel-shaped arbors; green cabinets; labyrinths: all things of mediocre effect, without picturesque character and whose arrangement does not indicate a very exact feeling of landscape beauty."<sup>34</sup> This highly critiqued style of *style regulier* is the form of landscape architecture Alphand sought to avoid, both because he fought it tyrannical and because he simply did not find it aesthetically inclined.

To contrast this form, Alphand wrote about the English style, or *les jardin irreguliers*.<sup>35</sup> The *jardin irregulier* presented a much more naturalistic style, a nature not overtly controlled as the *jardin regulier*. Alphand exhibited a fondness for the style. He wrote, "the gardens were a kind of poem, divided into chapters, relaying some historical or romantic scene, some gallant ideal."<sup>36</sup> Alphand's opinion on the *style irregulier* differed greatly from his opinion on the *style regulier*. His assessment on the *style regulier* almost appears bored, as he only wrote his description and immediate critique. Yet, he commended the *style irregulier* as "poetic" and likens the natural world to a piece of literature. Alphand's writings crystallize his preference for the *style irregulier*, which despite its lack of influence in traditional French landscape, presented the less-tyrannical and more-poetic option in landscape architecture.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., xxxix.

<sup>33</sup> *Les jardins reguliers* translates to "the regular gardens."

<sup>34</sup> Alphand. *Les Promenades de Paris*, xvii.

<sup>35</sup> *Les jardins reguliers* translates to "the irregular gardens."

<sup>36</sup> Alphand. *Les Promenades de Paris*, xxxiii.

Napoleon III and Haussmann both compounded Alphand's anxieties about creating a park that perfectly represented imperial France while maintaining traditional French culture. In essence, their motivations derived from a need to clarify their cultural and political leanings. Napoleon III and Haussmann both desired a park representing empire. Haussmann possessed a confused set of alliances to both monarchical and imperial France. He respected Napoleon III from the emperor's early reign. He wrote, "the beginning of the emperor's reign, marked by a number of amnesties, pardons and commutations of sentences, naturally benefits political compromises."<sup>37</sup> Yet, he also retained a loyalty to the July Monarchy, Haussmann wrote "I keep a respected memory of kindness of King Louis-Phillipe."<sup>38</sup> Therefore, though Alphand displayed discomfort at his park epitomizing the French monarchy, he still needed to partially show an allegiance to the traditional style of France to appease Haussmann. Napoleon III also concerned himself with swaying governmental identities. Prior to his formal emperorship as president of France, in 1849 during a speech, Napoleon III contended that a sovereign assembly and a sovereign president are incompatible.<sup>39</sup> He went on to claim Napoleon I answered this problem by not allowing a sovereign assembly and then curiously states "France, that is me!"<sup>40</sup> Having claimed the nation and himself were the same invoked a similarity between Napoleon III and Louis XIV who famously declared "I am the state."<sup>41</sup> Haussmann and Napoleon III both harbored royalists sympathies. Their sympathies could be due royalism and older French tradition being intimately intertwined, impossible to separate. Therefore it may not be that Napoleon III and Haussmann perpetuated confused French politics, but instead that they yearned to sustain some semblance of traditional French culture past its base monarchical roots. Alphand's superiors displayed a sympathy for monarchical and imperial France, which formed the base expectations of his park designs: to represent imperial France, with monarchical, and therefore traditional French, undertones.

Even with monarchical undertones, Alphand departed from strict traditional French styles in his park walkways created for the Bois de Boulogne. Alphand preferred the *style irregulier* but lacked the intellectual freedom to recreate an English park in France due to a need to promote a

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<sup>37</sup> Georges Eugene Haussmann, *Memoires du Baron Haussmann* (Paris, 1890-1893), 557.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>39</sup> Louis-Napoléon. *A Louis-Napoléon. Message du peuple français* (Paris: Garnier frères), 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Louis XIV ruled France as an absolutist monarch without having to answer to a parliament.

French identity. Instead, he kept the French terminology for gardening, the *style regulier*, innovating the style to incorporate *style irregulier* designs. He wrote, “One could even use the two styles [*styles irregulier and regulier*] which was adopted in Roman villas, *style regulier* but not symmetrical.”<sup>42</sup> Abandoning the symmetry of the walkways, the Bois de Boulogne carried the less severe and more natural appearance of *style irregulier*. Yet, by choosing to implement a walkway that still calls out to the French monarchy, Alphand paid his tribute to his superiors and French culture. The walkways of the Bois de Boulogne are a clear amalgamation of both *style regulier* and *style irregulier*, mixing English and French culture to break from the traditional absolutist monarchy of France.

The trees in the Bois de Boulogne reflected Alphand’s limitations to natural elements and his drive to overcome them. Alphand concerned himself with the natural state of the soil in the park. He partially adhered to his natural limitations, where the soil is most sandy, he conceded to build roads on top.<sup>43</sup> Alphand furthers his consideration of the soil by concluding that coniferous trees are best suited for siliceous and sandy soil. He curates a list of pines and cedars to adhere to these natural limitations.<sup>44</sup> Here, Alphand “gardens” with the *style irregulier* and worked with the environment, allowing for a naturalistic appearance. However, in some places of the park he employed an artificial approach, excavating and replacing soil.<sup>45</sup> While Alphand considered coniferous trees as appropriate natural decorations within the park, he specifically sought a Paulownia, a low-branched tree, for along the roads.<sup>46</sup> He created tree diversity in his park to make the Bois de Boulogne more picturesque. However, he also picked precise placement of these differentiated trees to highlight the roads, and therefore tightened the association to the Versailles gardens. The uniformity of the trees along the road held a striking dissimilarity to the coniferous trees, angled for a sub-natural aesthetic of the *style regulier*. Alphand’s tree curation and placement note another amalgamation of the *styles irregulier and regulier*.

While Alphand’s lacked true subservience to the older styles of gardening in France and England, he designed parts of his park with clear imperial undertones. Within his park, Alphand designs a zoo for the *Société impériale zoologique d’acclimatation*.<sup>47</sup> The process of (French)

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<sup>42</sup> Alphand, *Les Promenades de Paris*, xxxix.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>47</sup> *Société impériale zoologique d’acclimatation* translates to “Imperial zoologic society of acclimatization.”



acclimatization entailed importing plants and animals while adjusting them to the atmosphere of France. Of the process, Alphand wrote “to acclimatize, to multiply and spread, in the public, all the animal or vegetable species which are or which would be newly introduced in France and would appear worthy of interest by their [the society’s] utility or by their approval.”<sup>48</sup> He named a few non-native animals such as kangaroos, antelopes, and zebras he intended to include in the zoo.<sup>49</sup> The movement of these animals to France indicates an imperialistic leaning for the park. Instead of simply showcasing native animals of France, which could increase the French national image of the park, Alphand chose to diversify. These animals became luxury goods for France and acted only as entertainment and a means of education for Parisians and visitors. Alphand also constructed an aquarium and aviary, for exotic fish and birds. On the aviary Alphand wrote, “another advantage, resulting from this arrangement (of exotic importations), consists in being able to isolate precious young birds or other newcomer animals, which are not yet familiar in public view.”<sup>50</sup> His utilization of the aviary to promote amusement from the public indicates Alphand’s willingness to appease the Imperial Zoologique Society of Acclimatization. He spent pages detailing the size of cages and arrangements of the birds, employing a scientific precision to his small bird colony amidst a park that nearly resembled a little empire. Alphand’s work to bend the laws of nature in order to house exotic animals in Paris are acts of attainment of luxury goods and the support of scientific imperialism.

When designing the Bois de Boulogne, Alphand considered the French monarchy, republic, and empire. He incorporated aspects of all these governmental modes into his construction. He internally debated how to assume a compromise between the *styles irregulier* and *regulier*, therefore creating a park with French traditionalism without overt monarchical leanings. His mixture of styles in the design of his walkways and the tree curation/placement. Napoleon III’s and Haussmann’s respect for past traditions partially led to Alphand’s motivation to adhere to the *style regulier* of gardening, when his preference lay with *style irregulier*. However, Alphand clearly built parts of the park to match the imperial vision of France being promoted by Napoleon III. He did this with his building of the zoo, aviary, aquarium, and arboretum which all housed non-native species to France. While this portion of the park is one of the most artificial inclusions,

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 106.

it also indicates an imperialistic view of the world because of the importations of animals as luxury goods. With all of these concepts, Alphand attempts to create a park that imparts a positive outlook of France to combat the previous national traumas endured by Parisians. Through an idealistic vision of landscape, Alphand artificially creates an amalgamation of all the governmental cycles France saw in the sixty years prior to the construction of the Bois de Boulogne, though primarily with imperialist leanings.

## 1.2 Transnational and Comparative Park Design in the United States

In the United States, the next phase of the park development began with Olmsted and Vaux in 1957, who designed parks for pleasure more than internal nationalistic concerns. Olmsted and Vaux both received influences from European culture, and they saw architecture (landscape and otherwise) as an opportunity to culturally promote an aesthetically sensitive way of thinking. Throughout his writings, Olmsted revealed himself to have preferences natural scenery over unnatural, similar to Alphand's preference for the *style irregulier* over the *style regulier*.<sup>51</sup> Olmsted also shared Alphand's conscientiousness to what people would internally visualize when they look at the park but showed more concern for the contrast he hoped to set against the cityscape.<sup>52</sup> Olmsted and Vaux designed Central Park in a more naturalistic way than Alphand's Bois de Boulogne. Olmsted and (sometimes Vaux) focused on creating a place of healing for the urban dwellers.

Olmsted and Vaux sought influence from Europe to characterize American landscape architecture in Central Park. Olmsted did this by going to Europe to undertake the study of their parks. Vaux wrote at length in his *Villas and Cottages* about the shortcomings of American tastes, and his plan to improve upon it. Together, the two formatted a plan when constructing Central Park. The plan incorporated two ideas. One involved looking to Europe, mostly France, which Olmsted frequently cites. The second part required that the two evolve those European ideas to Americanize them, much like Alphand did with English and French ideas of gardening, to create a new style. In Olmsted's mind, the new American parks in New York presented a further development in city parks. He writes of Central Park, "I think it is in advance of any and all

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<sup>51</sup> Beveridge and Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III*, 195.

<sup>52</sup> Schuyler and Censer, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI*, 411.

European design in this development of art.”<sup>53</sup> Advancements are only made with the foundation, or Alphand’s work for Olmsted. *The German Ideology* revealed “the nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.”<sup>54</sup> This clarifies that Olmsted could only work with the ideal of landscape architecture he saw in Europe, only able to recreate a version of what was already in his mindscape. Though part of his othering material input would be his own American culture that he would advance in the French landscape, making the “advancements” he hoped to achieve by adding a differing culture to his designs. Olmsted looked to Europe for the park advancements Alphand constructed, but he aimed to not only match his landscape peer, but to compete with him by evolving landscape with American culture.

Olmsted’s job naturally aligned with Alphand’s. He dealt with infertile soil, tree curation and placement, the design of walkways and streets. Olmsted opportunistically saw landscape his architecture both as a continuation of Alphand’s works and held similar ways of thinking when designing. In planning, Olmsted took on a hallmark aspect of Alphand’s discussion in *Les Promenades de Paris*. This was the artificial/non-artificial binary. Alphand’s equivalent to this was the regulier/irregulier binary, which incorporated French and English tradition. Also, like Alphand, he preferred the non-artificial style over the artificial. Yet, unlike Alphand, he largely acted on his preferences, adhering to only some of the historical trauma the French architect had to mitigate.

Olmsted and Vaux did adhere to some of these national traumas that Alphand responded to, consciously or unconsciously, through their development of the broader drives and walks in Central Park and Prospect Park. In the Greensward Plan for Central Park, Olmsted and Vaux wrote “It is proposed that the principal driveways shall be sixty feet in width. This is the width of the most frequented drives of the Bois de Boulogne”.<sup>55</sup> This specification of noting the influence of the French park illuminate that Olmsted and Vaux utilized it as a preliminary rubric for their own plans. Olmsted noted this again when designing a walkway around a lake at Prospect Park. He wrote that he wanted a walkway of no less than fifty feet.<sup>56</sup> These wide streets and walkways gave visitors a similar visual of splendor that the French walkways endorse. Olmsted also wanted to

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<sup>53</sup> Beveridge and Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III*, 201.

<sup>54</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology: Parts I and III* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 7.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>56</sup> Schuyler and Censer, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI*, 415.

implement French circular *carrefours*, a round-about plaza where the streets meet.<sup>57</sup> This frequent mentioning of French design demonstrates that Olmsted's walkways and drives were taken from the Bois de Boulogne. Due to Alphand partially enforcing the *style regulier* through his walks by aiming to keep them strikingly distinguished from other park features, Olmsted carried on aspects of this *style regulier* as well in his walkway designs.

Though Olmsted kept in mind other priorities besides imitating French grounds, and he diverted his attention to keeping the walks and drives as a supplement to the park instead of a main feature. With reference to Prospect Park, Olmsted wrote "the drives and walks are not supposed to draw attention from the nature".<sup>58</sup> Though Olmsted included the walks and drives, for the practical purposes they serve, his main focus remained the natural scenery entailed via the parks. This preference for his designs of nature over the walkways and drives may have been guided by his partner, Vaux. In his *Villas and Cottages*, Vaux wrote that he had "a preference for the works of God to the works of man".<sup>59</sup> This writing strikes as rather odd coming from an architect, but Vaux reinforced Olmsted's instinct to keep the natural setting of the park as a primary function. Both Vaux and Olmsted revealed their collective reasoning for this preference in their Greensward Plan for Central Park. They note that the goal for the park is to contrast it with the city of New York.<sup>60</sup> Already known for its grid layout, New York harbored straight-lined streets that divided the city into rectangular blocks.<sup>61</sup> The urbanization in New York became a thing of concern for Olmsted and Vaux, and they aspired to mitigate that concern through their park design. One of those mitigations was their design for walkways to be "long and uninterrupted". They followed this line of thinking with their hope that Central Park would be a place where all classes of people in the city could find a place for "healthful recreation."<sup>62</sup> This priority marks where Olmsted redirected his goals from Alphand's. Although Olmsted and Vaux used the Bois de Boulogne as a rubric for their walks and drives, they consciously designed their park as an escape from New York City.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 411

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 401.

<sup>59</sup> Vaux, *Villas and Cottages*, 28.

<sup>60</sup> Beveridge and Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III*, 119.

<sup>61</sup> Steinberg, *Gotham Unbound*, xvi.

<sup>62</sup> Beveridge and Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III*, 212.

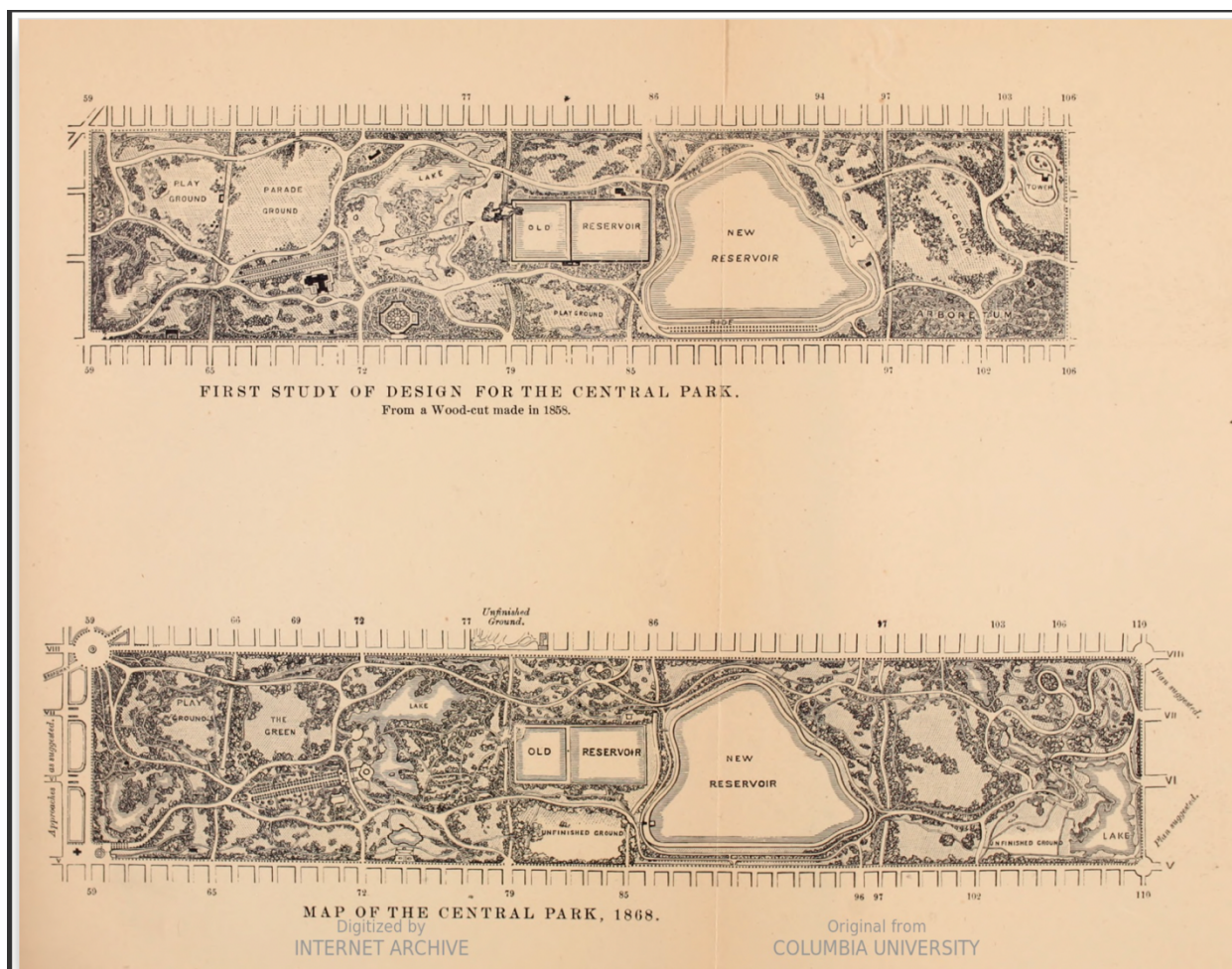


Figure 1: The illustration of Central Park shown in the “Greensward Plan” by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in 1858.<sup>63</sup>

Olmsted’s tree curation suggests another distinct French aspect of park design. Olmsted’s strikingly similar additions to Central Park, that resemble the Bois de Boulogne, are his tree nursery and preference for evergreen trees to highlight landscape. The tree nursery presents the most amusing tree curation of Central Park. For the nursery, Olmsted wanted an assortment of trees from the United States and Europe. Specifically, he planned to import a variety of European deciduous trees.<sup>64</sup> Within this nursery, Olmsted contented himself in reflecting the same unnatural curation of trees as Alphand, who planted deciduous trees only by changing the natural soil of the

<sup>63</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. *Description of a Plan for the Improvement of the Central Park. “Greensward,”* New York: The Aldine Press, 1858.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 109-110.

park grounds. Not only did Olmsted mirror Alphand's exact enactment of artificial gardening, but the style also reflects the imperialism shown in Alphand's arboretum. Olmsted did not use acclimatization interests, as Alphand did, as his reasoning for importing foreign trees, instead his motives seem to be purely aesthetic. Yet, his choosing to include a foreign assortment of trees shows the hints at the imperialist-leanings of Alphand. Olmsted's choice of evergreens for Central Park, though he wrote that they "best accord with, and set off, the picturesque rocks which are a marked feature of the landscape", also note his influence by the Bois de Boulogne where Alphand utilized evergreens due to their compatibility with silicious soil.<sup>65</sup> At his visitation of the French park, Olmsted would have largely seen coniferous trees which planted because of the soil type. Many of these trees were pines and cedars, both evergreen trees. Olmsted's usage of the same tree types as France for what he considered an aesthetically pleasing landscape reveals his positive opinion of the Bois de Boulogne's landscape. Together, Olmsted's importation of deciduous trees and usage of evergreens affirms his appreciation for the tree curation in France.

However, the Central Park tree selection and arrangement did not match the overt imperialistic French designs. One difference, although Olmsted imported European trees, he neglected to expand those importations elsewhere. In France, due to the desire to acclimatize other plants to the French climate, Alphand reached further outward and brought in trees from all over the world.<sup>66</sup> Rather than looking outward for trees, Olmsted and Vaux focused domestically. They wrote, "Space is provided to admit of at least three specimens of every native tree which is known to flourish in the United States north of North Carolina."<sup>67</sup> Olmsted may not have imported more trees because the United States already offered a vast area of land and tree selection. There lacked a need to search outward for trees save for reasons of an expansion aesthetics, which encompasses the addition of European trees. However, Olmsted and Vaux also struck at an opportunistic moment to declare that the United States held a more desirable amount of tree species than France. By showcasing only native trees in the arboretum, they invoked a fairly innocuous form of nationalism. Rather than an imperialistic tree selection, Olmsted and Vaux garnered native trees to bring an appreciation to the nature of the United States.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>66</sup> Alphand, *Les Promenades de Paris*, 110.

<sup>67</sup> Beveridge Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III*, 133.

Together, the walkways and trees of Central Park and Prospect Park produced an evolution from Alphand's arrangement. Alphand expressed limitations in his work at his subordination to Napoleon III and Haussmann and curtailed his work to appease monarchical and imperialistic ideals. Olmsted and Vaux had no such limitations, though they may have structured Central Park and Prospect Park with democratic features in mind. Jason Kosnoski argues in *Democratic Vistas: Frederick Law Olmsted's Park as Spatial Mediation of Urban Diversity* that Olmsted's spatial design related to the democratic nature of the United States.<sup>68</sup> Kosnoski specifically looks at the walkways and space provided in Olmsted's parks for his argument. For Prospect Park, Olmsted writes he aims for "convenient movement" among the grounds.<sup>69</sup> The walkways and drives that Olmsted and Vaux designed based on the Bois de Boulogne can also be construed as democratic in nature, because they allowed for that free movement with the vast space available. The tree arranged in a naturalistic placement method allow for a diverse landscape, also an aspect that an observer could project democracy onto. All of these features culminate into Olmsted and Vaux, who wrote that they considered their park to be a "democratic development of highest significance."<sup>70</sup> By calling their work a "development", Olmsted and Vaux likely considered the parks to be new and an evolution of earlier designs such as Alphand's. Though, because they worked in a democratic country that would value and allow naturalistic and free-moving designs, it is also likely that Olmsted and Vaux simply brought to realization a park that Alphand himself would have liked to produce.

Another key difference between Olmsted's and Alphand's park designs were their aims to build a defense against the mental disorders suffered by city-dwellers. When discussing the justification of large city parks such as Central Park, Olmsted wrote about these ailments. He specifically wrote on "what is lost and suffered under the name of "vital exhaustion", "nervous irritation", and "constitutional depression"; when we speak of tendencies, through excessive materialism, to loss of faith and lowness of spirit, by which life is made, to some, questionably worth living."<sup>71</sup> Olmsted demonstrated a wide range of concern for people, from slight sufferings of exhaustion to those with suicidal tendencies. However, he did relate all of these ailments back

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<sup>68</sup> Jason Kosnoski, "Democratic Vistas: Frederick Law Olmsted's Parks as Spatial Mediation of Urban Diversity," *Space and Culture* 14, no. 1 (2011), 51-66.

<sup>69</sup> Schuyler Censer, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI*, 403.

<sup>70</sup> Beveridge and Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III*, 201.

<sup>71</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *Essential Texts*. (New York: W.W Norton, 2010), 307-308.

to the advent of city-life and materialism. Olmsted's concern for mental ailments may be because he did not have to transition the style of nature utilized in park design as Alphonse did to respond to governmental changes. Instead of artificially attempting to combine different modes of government into a park design as Alphonse did, Olmsted focused his attention on the mental sufferings of city people in the United States.

Olmsted's concern parallels the advent of the term "neurasthenia" in 1869.<sup>72</sup> Neurasthenia, like Olmsted's other ailments of concern, covers a wide range of differentiated illnesses. It includes mental illnesses known in modernity as anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder. However, it was used to describe physical ailments too, such as what is known in the twenty-first century as fibromyalgia.<sup>73</sup> Olmsted was primarily concerned with mental ailments rather than physical in his description. He also provided parks for people of different classes, something he specifies in the *Greensward Plan*.<sup>74</sup> The term neurasthenia only applied to upper classes to differentiate themselves from the insane. Instead of insanity, the upper classes were given the understanding that they were simply "exhausted" from industrial related anxieties.<sup>75</sup> Olmsted did not limit his parks to only the upper classes of people, so it remains unlikely that he built his parks as a response to neurasthenia alone. However, neurasthenia exemplifies a growing idea that people struggled with mental ailments and that it did not necessarily equate insanity. Olmsted showed sensitivity to these mental ailments, by justifying his parks as a resource to industrialism.

Olmsted's empathy for the mental sufferings of people likely stemmed from personal inclinations. Olmsted's youth was marked by a restlessness, as he was unable to settle on any sort of profession for long. In his early adulthood he tried farming and writing, sticking with neither in that time. In his time constructing Central Park, Olmsted showed a similar restlessness. Though at that point he seemed to have intervals of great energy for the park construction and the politics involved. Yet, these intervals did not last indefinitely, and Olmsted's productivity faltered. These lapses in productivity can be discerned from when Olmsted writes letters to his father. One of those letters include that he planned on taking time off from work and would attend a sort of mental resort. He also added that his wife experienced "anxieties", writing, "Mary is half distracted with

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<sup>72</sup> David G. Schuster, *Neurasthenic Nation: America's Search for Health, Happiness, and Comfort, 1869-1920*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), 1.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Beveridge and Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III*, 212.

<sup>75</sup> Schuster, *Neurasthenic Nation*, 1.



her multitude of anxieties”.<sup>76</sup> Olmsted’s personal experiences with mental sufferings and lack of productivity likely influenced him to construct parks with that human condition in mind.

Olmsted’s priority of caring for people’s mental ailments becomes clear when he expanded his landscape architecture from city parks to the grounds of insane asylums. His design choices for these grounds had obvious differences from his city park. For example, in his preliminary suggestions for the Buffalo State Hospital for the Insane he suggested a fence to prevent wandering.<sup>77</sup> This is the most noticeable difference between Olmsted’s hospital ground designs and his city-park designs. For the Massachusetts General Hospital, he writes that “the most desirable qualities in the home grounds of a retreat for the insane are probably those which favor an inclination towards moderate exercise and tranquil occupation of the mind.”<sup>78</sup> These specifications for his design ring similar to his city-park designs, as he wanted the parks avail themselves for recreational purposes and escape from the city. Olmsted seems adamant that having contact with nature is necessary to living, and with any luck, living with mental stability. For patients who were restricted from going outside, he wanted to design an “airing court” where they could at least feel air from outside.<sup>79</sup> This concern also relates to Olmsted’s park escapism, although in the hospital it becomes more generally a nature escapism. He showed innate awareness that people cannot reside simply in buildings or city streets, they must have a connection with nature, however small. Intent on providing nature in different forms to people suffering with mental ailments, Olmsted’s desires for hospital grounds paralleled his city park designs.

Olmsted’s purpose of aiding people in what he considered a search for recreation and escapism partially came from his association with France. He stated that these outdoor spaces were becoming a common occurrence in Europe, city parks naturally coinciding with growing urbanization. He specifically references Napoleon III’s French empire as a part of this transition, and that these new parks that were created for the purposes of recreation had already been shown to be a success.<sup>80</sup> As part of the park movement and a member of city-planning, Olmsted looked to Napoleon III’s imperial plans for the Haussmannization of Paris for preliminary guidance. In *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris*, David Pinkney wrote in his introduction that city-

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<sup>76</sup> Beveridge and Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III*, 230.

<sup>77</sup> Schuyler and Censer, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI*, 454.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 585.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 452.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

planners United States “owe much to Napoleon III”.<sup>81</sup> Though Pinkney does not delve into the specifics of how the United States gained from the cultural changes in Paris set off by the Haussmanization process, within Olmsted’s writings that one of the transnational cultural influences was Alphand’s park designs. French parks were a solution to America’s unique problems.

Just as Olmsted sought to create natural spaces that appeared in a less artificial way than France, he also spent more time contemplating (via his writings) on what his park-goers would feel while at the park. As already established, Olmsted wanted his walkways to be useful for recreational exercise, and also to allow for a freedom of movement. He wanted his landscape to appear natural and provide the opposite for the cityscape. He explicitly stated his internal dilemma about the making of parks, writing “if we cannot make it more graceful, more interesting, more inviting, more convenient, then we are doing nothing.”<sup>82</sup> Olmsted resolutely worked at making his parks “more” than earlier parks. He sought the next step of making parks better for people, and the way he did was by incorporating solutions to mental ailments and city fatigue into his designs. Though many of those designs appear democratic, they double as sensitive to public health. The diversity of trees, placement, large walkways all allow for an openness for people of all classes. These parks designed by Olmsted also offer at least a small alleviation for the mental struggles of some people, potentially including himself.

While Olmsted did take these notions of democratic and mentally sensitive landscaping, Alphand started the park movement with sensitivity to people’s internal imagery. Alphand did not simply make imperial parks and bend to his superiors. He chose a compromise of styles and incorporated naturalistic landscape designs as well. He evidently succeeded in making an aesthetically pleasing landscape that inspired the works of Olmsted. An integral similarity between Alphand and Olmsted was their consideration of people’s minds. For Alphand, that consideration included transitioning greenspaces for the new Second French Empire. For Olmsted, he considered the mental ailments city-dwellers endured because of the stress of urbanization. He also took one step further and designed landscapes for hospitals, clarifying his belief that people needed a

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<sup>81</sup> David Pinkney, *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958), 4.

<sup>82</sup> Charles E. Beveridge and Carolyn F. Hoffman, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Supplementary Series Volume I: Writings on Public Parks, Parkways, and Park Systems* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 153.

connection with nature in order to live fulfilled lives. It remains important to stress that Alphand was not insensitive to the mental lives of park-goers, he simply had other internalized problems to address.

The Bois de Boulogne and its designer, Adolphe Alphand, held a crucial influence over the construction of new city parks in the United States by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Alphand had national considerations to make about France when constructing his park. Due to the repetitive revolutions in France and their subsequent differentiating governmental structures, Alphand sought a transitional style of park that evolved from *style regulier*. Alphand combined the landscape styles of *regulier* and *irregulier* to form a compromise between the governmental styles of France. These styles affected things like walkways and drives, tree curation and arrangement, and his inclusion of a park zoo. Olmsted, both a contemporary and peer of Alphand's, utilized the Bois de Boulogne as a template for city parks. Olmsted and his partner Vaux clearly demonstrate a likeness to French walkways and drives in their designs of Central Park and Prospect Park. Their choices for tree curation choices differ from the French choices considerably due to a lack of foreign imports, though they show preferences for some European trees. However, because of many of the trees being native to the United States, Olmsted and Vaux reveal an opportunistic national pride in their parks. Their parks align with democratic values while the French parks largely support an imperial nature.

To further the responsibilities of park-makers, Olmsted also became interested in designing his parks to help people experiencing mental struggles both in city parks and in hospital grounds. Though there are considerable differences between urban parks designed in France and the United States, their respective park movements are linked by the need to address perceived internal struggles in the forms of governmental transitions and mental ailments in likeness to neurasthenia. Alphand designed reactively in the face of Napoleon III's reign of France, resulting in a largely imperial park design. Olmsted and Vaux, influenced by Alphand's Bois de Boulogne and *Les Promenades de Paris*, designed Prospect Park and Central Park with fragments of Alphand's imperial style while also developing an American style that showed concern for mental ailments of city-dwellers. This study illuminates the genesis and primary developments of city parks in France and the United States that are still open to the public. Alphand, Olmsted, and Vaux built the parks to address their perceived needs of city-dwellers.

## CHAPTER 2. THE GREEN AESTHETIC: A TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY OF THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF PRAGMATIC AESTHETICISM IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, 1859 – 1890

Prior to 1879, Édouard André (1833-1894) visited several parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in New York State, including Central Park and Prospect Park. Upon returning to France, André wrote on his observations in his monumental work, *L'Art des Jardins*. In this work, André not only frequently cited Olmsted and Vaux for their designs, but highly praised the two for “rapidly developing the art of landscape architecture.”<sup>83</sup> André’s visit and appreciation for landscape architecture is significant for several reasons. He began a two-way conversation between France and the United States about park development, which began with Olmsted’s previous visit to France in 1859. This two-way conversation allowed for information to flow across country lines, and in doing so, Olmsted and Andre raised landscape architecture to the stature of a true artform.

This chapter is about the development of park theory within the United States and France around the concepts of pragmatism and aesthetics. In structure, this development will be displayed through an integrative comparative history, while also noting the conversational tones between American and French landscape architects. In the United States, Olmsted developed his ideology on landscape architecture through projects relating to a variety of different levels of educational and disability facilities. In each of these facilities, Olmsted worked with his own perceptions of students’ and patients’ needs to design a landscape that he found sensitive to specific necessities. In his development, he took this same approach with city parks, perceiving the needs of city dwellers, and building a park accordingly. In France, development occurred between two landscape architects, Adolphe Alphand and André. Alphand centered his focus the Parisian needs after the historical trauma of multiple revolutions in the capital city. However, André looked past these immediate issues and focused instead on overall potential aesthetics of parks. Olmsted, Alphand, and André indirectly worked together to advance landscape architecture in ways of aesthetics, medical thought, and contextualizing their parks within larger industrialization processes of the United States and France. These advancements in landscape architecture made parks an integral part of cityscapes and urban dwellers’ lives.

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<sup>83</sup> Édouard André, *L'Art des Jardins: Traité Général de la composition des Parcs et Jardins*. (Paris, 1879), vi.

Building urban greenspaces within or in proximity to cities, educational, and medical centers was a part of two other movements in the United States: the Morrill Act of 1862 and growing sanitary efforts. The Morrill Act, put forth by Senator Justin Morrill (Vermont), sought to donate public lands to create agricultural and mechanical colleges. The act reveals a growing trend towards placing a high value on higher education in the United States. It also notes a change within high education, colleges started to provide education for practical pursuits, such as agriculture. By educating people in a wider variety of specializations that include agriculture and mechanics, these schools ensured that a larger amount of the U.S. populace receive general schooling in subjects such as liberal arts along with their specialization. Gordon G. Lee stated that this happened in concert with higher education becoming a function of national government and placing more value on intellectualism over religion.<sup>84</sup> The foundation of agricultural and mechanic colleges through the Morrill Act signaled a movement towards the democratization of education and with it, a higher chance of class mobility through education.

Sanitary efforts in the U.S. went through a similar transition towards federalization and (relative) democratization of medical care. John Duffy's *The Sanitarians: A History of American Public Health* narrated the development of public health in the U.S., starting with the European colonization. Duffy explained that in the years leading up to the Civil War, people who would potentially rally for sanitary reforms instead spent their time on the abolition movement.<sup>85</sup> From these pre-war years till the 1860's sanitary efforts were largely ignored and considered a social problem, not a medical problem. Hygiene and morality, spiritually linked, indicated that sickness derived from a morality issue.<sup>86</sup> Responses to epidemics in the first half of the nineteenth century included religious practices. An extreme example, President Zachary Taylor called for national prayer and fasting during the 1849 cholera outbreak as a solution.<sup>87</sup> In the 1860s this mentality began shifting as conventions held conversation on larger efforts to be made in cities such as street cleaning and new sewer systems. The Civil War saw another step in sanitary reform with the Sanitary Commission, a new private agency with the goal of aiding the Union Military to provide preventative measures against illnesses such as malaria or smallpox. New sanitary efforts

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<sup>84</sup> Gordon G. Lee, "The Morrill Act and Education." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 12, no. 1 (1963), 19-40.

<sup>85</sup> John Duffy, *The Sanitarians*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 67.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>87</sup> Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 121.

displayed an altering of perceptions from considering contagious illness as a social and religious problem to a medical problem in the collective community.

## 2.1 Olmsted's Personal and Professional Development

These developments in the United States coincided with Olmsted's professional and personal evolution that took place over the course of his career. Olmsted acquired no formal landscape architecture training (or training from other relevant fields such as engineering). In letters to his father, he revealed that he believed his experience as a writer led to him obtaining the position of Architect-in-Chief of Central Park. Though, his attainment of the position likely had more to do with his partnership with Calvert Vaux, who possessed a formal education in architecture and drafted unknown amounts of the Greensward Plan.<sup>88</sup> Whatever the reason for Olmsted's new position, he entered the world of landscape architecture with little preconceived notions of the craft.

Olmsted's ideals for park design began with an altruistic tone, but they did not possess the detailed understanding of design aesthetics, and their political and practical functions, until after he designed multiple parks. In a letter to the Commissioners of Central Park, dated May 20, 1858, Olmsted wrote, "I shall aim to effect the realization of the plan for the park, modified as a mature study of the needs of the public may seem to you desirable, in the most energetic and economical manner."<sup>89</sup> Olmsted clarified his lacking ability to posit any claims on what Central Park would eventually look like and represent. His phrase, "a mature study of the needs of the public," indicates that Olmsted simply does not know what the public needed. The phrase also shows Olmsted's willingness to learn and his goal of creating a park that offered urban dwellers a positive force in their lives. Yet, even with more experience, Olmsted would remain detached from the needs of the park-goers for which he designed due to his lack of personal understanding. Marx and Engels wrote in *The German Ideology*, "Just because individuals seek only their particular interest i.e. that not coinciding with their communal interest (for the "general good" is the illusory form of communal life), the latter will be imposed on them as an interest "alien" to them, and "independent"

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<sup>88</sup> *The Greensward Plan* was a draft of a landscape architectural plan submitted to the Commissioners for Central Park in a competition to win the position of head landscape architect in the making of Central Park.

<sup>89</sup> Charles E. Beveridge and Davis Schuyler, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume III: Creating Central Park, 1857-1861* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 192.

of them, as in its turn a particular, peculiar “general interest.”<sup>90</sup> Even with his altruistic endeavors, the most Olmsted could do is work with what he considered to be the needs of people visiting his parks. In his position as a park-designer, he innately lost the ability to comprehend the needs of lower and working socio economic classes for whom he built parks. Olmsted started his park designs as a humanitarian project, but he lacked the experience, education, and socio-economic status to specify how his parks would contribute to the park-goers’ life.

Though Olmsted did not possess a higher education, he advanced his career by working on the grounds of agricultural schools, established by the Morrill Act, as well as specialized and primary educational facilities. Agricultural campuses provided Olmsted a space to begin to realize a multitude of functions his greenspaces could provide communities. For a university grounds, Olmsted set out with the intention of arranging a farmhouse, orchard, botanical garden, and parade ground.<sup>91</sup> The farmhouse, orchard, and botanical garden all provide students educational spaces, fulfilling the purpose of the newly founded colleges. The parade ground displays a more complex design, because it suggested a support of the military and general physical fitness. Both these educational and military grounds serve vocational purposes, particularly for the rural population that filtered into these schools. Olmsted’s designs for this population clarified his political leanings in support of the working class. He wrote that his objective was “to give liberal education to men who are to remain part of the industrial class.”<sup>92</sup> Olmsted’s use of the word “remain” supports the notion of differentiation of socio-economic class with an inability for social mobility. *The German Ideology* stated, “the practical struggle of these particular interests [communal interests], which constantly really run counter to the communal and illusory communal interests, made practical intervention and control necessary through the illusory “general interest” in the form of the state.”<sup>93</sup> Therefore, while Olmsted sought to support the idea of liberal education in the industrial class, he also sought to inhibit their ability to leave the industrial class. Outside of city-park design, Olmsted evolved from building parks for the generic “people” to specific groups of people, such as the

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<sup>90</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology: Parts I and III* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 23-24.

<sup>91</sup> David Schuyler and Jane Turner Censer, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI: The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company, 1865-1874*. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 170.

<sup>92</sup> Schuyler and Censer, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume VI*, 170.

<sup>93</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology: Parts I and III* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 24.

working class. He also developed a differentiation between himself and the classes of people he sought to aid and immobilize simultaneously.

Olmsted expanded into designing for other educational institutions, including educational centers for people with disabilities and primary educational facilities. In his designs for the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Olmsted recommended the grounds “need agreeable sensation or delicate perception.”<sup>94</sup> This proposal, though vague, indicates Olmsted’s willingness to administer grounds of differentiating functions for a large range of communities. For this institution he designed grounds that agree to people’s senses, likely sight, to cater to the group expected to utilize the grounds. His agricultural schools on the other hand, serve vocational purposes. Broadening further, Olmsted writes on building children’s playgrounds for elementary schools. He claimed that recreational exercise contributes to education and that “bodies suffer in buildings”.<sup>95</sup> Here, it becomes clear that Olmsted combined the notion of recreational time outside of building is educational, as exercise or training, and physically healthy. This consideration for recreation wellness also connects to his earlier work on parade grounds for military drills. Olmsted’s work on schools for groups with disabilities, children, and students with connection to the military allowed him to pragmatically conceptualize the overlapping values of recreational exercise as a healthful and educational discipline.

Along with these practical implementations, Olmsted took issue with traditional school ground designs. He sought to discard the older quadrangular design, and created “a more free, liberal, picturesque, and convenient” design plan.<sup>96</sup> Olmsted’s design description of the newer school grounds he desired to implement connect both to aesthetics and practicality. By designing a school grounds with liberal space for movement and convenient movement, he prepared for two different types of activities. One enabled collegiate students to easily get to class or meetings. The other activity is less definitive. A liberal space could be utilized to empower students and their growth in a number of different ways. One of these could be exercise, which would be consistent for Olmsted’s values for school grounds. However, the space may also have been thought to give students a freedom to hold organization events. Most likely, Olmsted considered that the space he designed could be utilized for any and all of these activities. Outside of his base intentions for the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 315-16.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 193.



grounds, Olmsted's designs are striking because he managed to infuse aesthetics with practicality. He put the idea of a grounds designed for movement in ways of accessibility, healthful exercise, or student events and "picturesque" in the same line of thought when planning for campus grounds. Olmsted's park designs rely on his developing park aesthetics with park practicality, and he began to fully realize these concepts' interdependence when designing school grounds.

In fully realizing the practicality of park aesthetics, Olmsted opportunistically utilizes his design power to subtly but definitively make political statements. Olmsted began to repeat a set of vocabulary regarding his designs. Among them, "liberal" and "picturesque", remain common word choices. For clarity, "liberal" in this context means "of considerable amount" or at least "enough." Olmsted purposefully applied this word consistently throughout his parks for the schools already mentioned. However, his meaning in such a consistent usage of the word only becomes clear when writing about designs for Newark Park. Olmsted writes, "arranging this scenery that it may be brought under the eye of a large number of observers continuously."<sup>97</sup> By addressing his intention for the park to be enjoyed by a large amount of people at once, Olmsted strengthened his democratic view on the function of parks. Olmsted's desire to have a large accessibility to park aesthetics echoes his belief that all men in industrial classes should have access to a liberal education. Working on schools for the Morrill Act focused Olmsted on some form of class mobility. Though he did not seem to advocate people of the industrial class leaving the industrial class for other kinds of work, he did want people of the industrial class to have access to higher liberal education and aesthetics. As a landscape architect, Olmsted sought to support his political leanings by providing easily accessible and aesthetically pleasing parks, for schools and cities.

In certain aspects, city parks required more forethought to make them accessible to a wide variety of people. In the case of school grounds, Olmsted conceived of accessibility in a very contained manner. The grounds were accessible for students, sometimes of differing socio-economic classes and abilities, but still for students alone. For Newark Park, his concern with allowing for a many people to look upon the park at once, still reflected an isolation of concern. When considering city parks, Olmsted inherently considered the city around the park. In his early design of Central Park, himself and Vaux consider the city streets that portions of the park intersect. In response to this, Olmsted and Vaux design bridges, to easily conjoin parts of the park across city streets. This design mode aids urban dwellers by allowing the city to go un-interrupted, while

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 212.

also leaving the park pathways uninterrupted. The grid layout of New York City forced Olmsted to consider park designs that minimally hindered the flow of the city. In doing this, he began to design small portions of the larger cityscape that surrounded his parks and affected a wider range of people.

Olmsted's concern for the layout of city streets adjacent to potential parks grew beyond adjusting designs for pre-existing streets, to actively using streets for park accessibility. In a letter to the Park Commission of Philadelphia, Olmsted wrote on how the location of the park is potentially more important than the internal designs of the park itself because if the park lacks accessibility, then it will fall to unuse. In an effort to provide easier accessibility to the park, Olmsted extended the park drives further out.<sup>98</sup> Intermingling park design with the city layout of Philadelphia indicates Olmsted's growing awareness of the importance for external accessibility. This design showed where Olmsted's ideal of easy movement within his parks transcends park boundaries and flows into the larger cityscape. Olmsted proposed a similar route of accessibility for a park in Albany. He wrote that the park should intersect with streets and railroads to allow a larger amount of people to visit the park.<sup>99</sup> This consideration steps beyond Olmsted previous concern of increasing the length of park drives, and instead this placement acts almost as a form of outreach. For the park to be placed among railroads and streets, the park would become a common scenery in the cityscape for people travelling along those paths. Here, with Olmsted's new consideration for his parks within the larger street layouts of cities, he made parks easily accessible to a wider amount of people. By making parks accessible to a wider amount of people, he created a city-segment that incorporated his designs of easy movement, for all classes of people. Accessibility, in all of its forms, became a priority in Olmsted's development of his own brand of park aesthetics.

An aesthetic trait that paralleled Olmsted's desire to make his parks internally and externally accessible was the liberal movement allowed in his parks, supported by irregular planting of trees and placement of walkways. While Olmsted interpreted this irregular design style from France, he implemented the design to larger degrees and his primary concern largely centered on providing aesthetics to city-dwellers. A key example of his Olmsted moved beyond his French contemporary in reasoning for design is the Central Park Zoo. Alphand designed the zoo in the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 297-8.

Bois de Boulogne as a small example of scientific imperialism, by importing multiple different kinds of animals from other areas of the world and acclimating them to France. However, Olmsted stated that the Central Park Zoo existed primarily for “gratification and entertainment”.<sup>100</sup> Olmsted did not relay any sort of imperialistic leanings in his park designs, though parks with non-native animals always hold a sense of imperialism. Instead, Olmsted fixated on aesthetics to furnish the zoo with the atmosphere necessary to elicit feelings of gratification and entertainment, or in general, positive feelings. These aesthetics include planting flowers and shrubs in irregular plots, coinciding with Olmsted’s desire for easy movement and paralleling with his accessibility cause.<sup>101</sup> In the case of the zoo, Olmsted’s aesthetics appear separate from Olmsted’s pragmatic accessibility designs, they still feature atmospheric accessibility in irregularity.

Olmsted differed from France in the causation for implementation and frequency of the irregular design style, but specifically with bodies of water, he also carries the conception of irregularity further. With Central Park, Olmsted began his conceptualization in tandem with Alphand’s French bodies of water, calling the shape of the water “irregular”.<sup>102</sup> The Park Commission of Philadelphia enabled Olmsted to broaden his conceptualization of bodies of water within parks. Prior to Olmsted’s involvement on the design for Fairmont Park, the park commissioners already had a pre-arranged scheme for the conservation of the purity of water for the city. The idea for the park grew out of the ideal for clean water.<sup>103</sup> Naturally, the clean water supply came from the concern for the health of the city. However, in addition to the practical pursuit of health by the park commissioners, they also opportunistically planned to build a park along the river of the reservoir. Olmsted artificially planned on making the shores of the river “varied and interesting”.<sup>104</sup> While Olmsted neglected to detail how he intended to make these shores interesting, his phrasing does show development past his notion of simply making the shape of the body of water irregular. He furthered his aesthetic understandings of water as the city of Philadelphia utilized the water for healthfulness of its citizens.

In producing parks for educational centers and city parks Olmsted was able to develop his style of park aesthetics as a part of the other practical functions of the park. However, Olmsted’s

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 234.

primary objective in the development of aesthetics, remained the aesthetics themselves, serving more elusive functions than accessibility. Olmsted development of aesthetics and their base functions hit a peak in his designs for Newark Park. He notes that exempt from other considerations, a public park is supposed to be a work of art. He goes on to claim that he hoped that people who would visit his park would “have a certain effect on the mind”.<sup>105</sup> Though Olmsted himself regards his own work as primarily a work of art, when broken down that still holds a semi-practical value. He did not write if the effect he was imagining would be positive or negative, or in some people both, but it can be ascertained that in having an effect on the mind he at least meant “reflective”. By making easily accessible a work of art that can be viewed by many people, Olmsted created a place where people can reflect on their lives. The work of art elicited self-reflection, and as the park can allow many people to gaze on the artform provided, the park becomes a democratic way of experiencing therapeutic aesthetics. In ways of self-reflection, Olmsted’s value of aesthetics in parks still maintain pragmatic functions.

Olmsted development of park aesthetics consisted of his belief in making his parks of practical use, easily accessible (internally and externally), as a further approach to the irregular style of landscape, and to deliver the same reflective feelings as traditional artforms. The Morrill Act of 1862 aided Olmsted in his constructing his style of landscaping by expanding the types of parks he designed and the types of people he provided for. Olmsted also worked on other types of educational centers, including a center for people with disabilities and an elementary school. From building grounds for colleges and schools, Olmsted chose to make the grounds of practical use for education and a place where liberal, free movement could be practiced. In turn, Olmsted administered similar values when constructing parks for cities. He wrote on locations of several parks, and noted that they needed to be built where people had easy access to them, either on drives or railroads. Olmsted also worked with the Park Commissioners of Philadelphia to build a park as a part of a reservoir for clean water. However, even with all of these pragmatic implementations and considerations for adding a park as a small part of the cityscape, Olmsted noted that he found the primary purpose of a park is to provide a work of art. Combined with Olmsted’s work on making his parks accessible and pragmatically useful, his hope for providing art to a large amount of people is an example of democratizing aesthetics.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 211.

## 2.2 Transnational Park Development in France

Olmsted's development on park aesthetics transcended the United States into French landscape architecture thought, largely through Édouard André, but also by his predecessor and mentor, Adolphe Alphand. Alphand and André both wrote about the value of aesthetics in their work, but they did so in a much different tone and frequency. For Alphand, he largely (but not entirely) aimed for aesthetics in his park designs to be representative of the Second French Empire. Alphand gave other practical reasonings behind greenspaces and roads he designed, including health and convenience. André approached aesthetics in park design very differently. In *L'Art des Jardins*, André set out to write about the aesthetics themselves, claiming that there was not enough literature on park aesthetics.<sup>106</sup> In his work, André involved underlying connections to the aesthetics in park that Olmsted featured in the United States. Similar themes such as accessibility, extreme irregular design, and practicality emerge in André's writings, illuminating the two-way conversation France and the United States share park design.

Alphand went through a transition in his value of aesthetics between his first work, *Les Promenades de Paris* (1873), and his second (co-authored) work, *L'Art des Jardins* (1886). Though these works differ in meaning. *Promenades* pertains to Alphand's work, design making, and reasoning. *L'Art des Jardins* offers a more reflective glance at Alphand's historical park designs in Paris and their larger aesthetic implications. The work is also co-authored with Baron Alfred-Auguste Ernouf (1817-1889), a French historian, indicating that the work functions as a historical work rather than an architectural instruction manual. Nevertheless, the two works offer the opportunity to establish a change of focus Alphand had towards the end of his career, when he and Ernouf published *L'Art des Jardins*.

Like Olmsted, Alphand practiced combining aesthetics with practical effect. In *Promenades*, Alphand stated that he intended to apply both science and art of salubrity.<sup>107</sup> Salubrity means healthfulness, or the promotion of good health. A term often used by nineteenth-century French and American landscape architects, it loosely combined artistic and healthful values in their designs. In his work on adding plants to the streets of Paris, Alphand explained that these plants were necessary to create a liberal circulation of the air. He then further explained these

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<sup>106</sup> André, *L'Art des Jardins*, v.

<sup>107</sup> Alphand, *Les Promenades de Paris*, 59.

plants show the conditions of salubrity in the city.<sup>108</sup> Reflecting Alphand's concerns, his designs largely centered on supporting the governmental structure of France and the physical health of Parisians. Therefore, as Olmsted had developed his park designs as a means of accessibility, Alphand developed his as a way of support and stability.

Alphand developed his designs under the pressure of the Second French Empire, but he later considered the aesthetics in nature park designs could offer. These considerations differed from his earlier explanations on designs, which always showed connection to the pragmatic governmental and scientific appeasement. Alphand and Ernouf wrote that "this art consists of the combination of natural landscapes, idealism, and poetry."<sup>109</sup> This explanation of landscape architecture had developed past conforming to modes of government. Instead, Alphand moved into writing how simply to make parks more beautiful. Alphand shows a particular fondness for the potentials that bodies of water can contribute to the overall beauty of a park. He stated that water is the most difficult design in irregular gardens.<sup>110</sup> To successfully implement the designs, Alphand suggests placing an island in the body of water, or to put trees with hanging branches on the edges, specifically the Louisiana Cypress.<sup>111</sup> Having already implemented these designs in the Bois de Boulogne and Bois de Vincennes, Alphand wrote from a purely reflective and developmental standpoint. The empire that Alphand had built the parks to represent had fallen in 1870, and the Third French Republic replaced it. In *L'Art des Jardins*, divorced from imperial pressure and the political underlining's of the irregular style, Alphand wrote on the style as a simple instrument of beauty within landscape architecture. In this work Alphand's displayed an aesthetic preference and willingness to develop the irregular style to further landscape aesthetics.

Alphand's successor, André, felt influence and made critiques on *Les Promenades de Paris*. André was not formally Alphand's successor in any political or vocational role, but he furthered Alphand's idealized landscapes and also brought these landscapes into other nation-state in Europe. Alphand hired André in 1860 as an assistant to aid him in the construction of the Bois de Vincennes. Only twenty years of age, an impressionable André was influenced by Alphand's aesthetic preferences for landscapes. André's dedicated his work, *L'Art des Jardins*, to Alphand, indicating André's high level of respect and adoration for his former employer and mentor. With his work on

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>109</sup> Alfred-Auguste Ernouf et Adolphe Alphand, *L'Art des Jardins: Parcs, Jardins, Promenades*. (Paris: 1886), 124.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 165.

parks and the publication of *L'Art des Jardins*, André addressed the lack of written material on park design. He commended Alphand on *Les Promenades de Paris*, but continued to write that it is one of few works on the discipline of park design. Given that André knew and worked with Alphand, while clearly being well-acquainted with his written work, *L'Art des Jardins* was made to be in conversation and a continuation of *Les Promenades de Paris*. The two works contain the same arrangement of chapters (starting with a history section, then moving onto aesthetics and potential implementations), a continuing conversation on the irregular style of gardening, and thoughts on the meaning of aesthetics in park design. In his written work, André transformed park design into an evolving aesthetic philosophy, something to be written down conversationally between landscape architects, over the course of many years.

Though André clearly revered Alphand, he wrote more on Olmsted and Vaux as influential figures in park aesthetics. Appearing in awe of the transformation to park design in the United States, André seemed to believe that Olmsted and Vaux had progressed the art of landscape design past Alphand's designs. As stated in the previous chapter, Olmsted and Vaux utilized Alphand's work as a template and made moderate modifications. This may have been part of the reason why André thought of the United States as more advanced in landscape architecture than France. André also wrote that he considered the United States to be more progressive after the Civil War (in landscape architecture). He continued to note that Olmsted and Vaux had the freedom to develop their art in landscape architecture.<sup>112</sup> Here, André alluded to the lack of freedom Alphand had in France to fully realize and develop the irregular style in public parks. Due to Alphand's lack of freedom in France, Olmsted and Vaux's development of park aesthetics feature in the international conversation André presents in his work.

André developed his own style and values of park design based on Alphand and Olmsted. However, André considered himself moving past Alphand and Olmsted in areas of design. In his preface he noted that "if we are moving past gardens of utility, we search for an enrichment of vegetable garden culture..."<sup>113</sup> Therefore, André did want to move past any productive modes that gardens upheld in the past in his park designs. To do this, André supported the acceleration of arboriculture, horticulture societies, and garden schools. Promoting these educational pursuits, André firmly believed that these sciences still did not progress art within park design, which he

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<sup>112</sup> André, *L'Art des Jardins*, 772.

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

considered his primary concern.<sup>114</sup> André's promotion of these scientific education and Alphand's appeasement of the Society of Acclimation were derivatives of a longstanding French culture surrounding the study of botany.<sup>115</sup> The support of these sciences also paralleled Olmsted support of the Morrill Act in the United States. In both countries, the development of agriculture, or related sub fields (arboriculture for examples), became necessary for the development aesthetics in parks. There existed an innate connection between park-making and the status of agricultural needs and pursuits in proximity. Olmsted himself sought to aid agricultural education, while André wished to look beyond what he considered a pragmatic utilization of the land.

In conjunction with movement toward a more artistic use of the land, André wrote on the health benefits of parks. While Alphand wrote on the salubrity that parks could bring through the circulation of the air, André displayed a more elusive definition of health. He wrote that, "nothing would be more popular for hygiene and public health than the multiplication of public parks" and cites the United States as a nation that has already implemented many public parks.<sup>116</sup> He wanted his parks to be utilized as a place of exercise, recreation, and hobbies.<sup>117</sup> He even wrote ancient civilization's comprehension the importance of gymnastic practice to maintain a strong physical force (likely for the military) and the health of the citizens.<sup>118</sup> Tying public health with the need to engage in physical exercise related to Olmsted building parks for the same reason. André confirmed this connection by crediting the United States as a place that already provided multiple parks for these purposes. Recreation and hobbies show that André also looked for preventative measures against other kinds of illness, potentially neurasthenia. Although the specific types of illnesses André sought to guard people against remains somewhat unclear, he acquired a larger reach by anticipating the variety of physical, social, and otherwise fulfilling activities people could partake in within public parks.

André's use of the phrase "multiplication of public parks" insinuates two meanings. One, discussed above, represents a chance to increase preventative measures for public health. The second, and perhaps less obvious meaning, indicates André's aim to design multiple public parks in France and other countries. Given André's aspiration in building on park aesthetics as a

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

<sup>115</sup> The first botany garden in France was the Jardin du Roi in Paris, functioning as a medicinal garden for Louis XVI.

<sup>116</sup> Andre, *L'Art des Jardins*, 187.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 198.



philosophy, designing more parks enabled him to give a wide range of comments and critiques on the subject. Though André does design multiple parks in several countries, he also utilized Olmsted's and Vaux's designs for Central Park and Prospect Park as a template on two distinct areas of design.

In designing parks as a functioning part of the larger city they reside in, André copied Olmsted and Vaux's considerations for the city streets of New York City. André cited Central Park as exemplary in isolating pedestrian walkways from the circulation of traffic.<sup>119</sup> At the time, that traffic consisted of horses and carriages in the streets, and potentially dangerous to step into traffic. Perhaps more importantly, coming into contact with city-streets would make the park visitor lose site of the ambiance of the park in relation to the city. Therefore, it became a safer and more aesthetically pleasing to isolate walkways from the streets. To do this, Olmsted had implemented bridges over streets already pre-existing in New York City. For André, these innovations for the walkways and of the pedestrians and the bridges that provided that divide represented some of the principal features of Central Park. Though Olmsted sometimes received backlash on his inclusion of the bridges due to their imperial aesthetic, André found them noteworthy. The bridges, aesthetically pleasing in of themselves, also provided park visitors to fully experience the atmosphere of the picturesque scenery of the park, uninterrupted. With André's high value on aesthetics, his appreciation for the bridges exemplified wanting to build an oasis for aesthetics, unhindered by the outside city.

Wanting to evolve landscape architecture past Alphand's designs, André incorporated Olmsted's artistic designs on bodies of water. As Alphand found bodies of water particularly difficult to design, André also considered this aspect of park design to be especially delicate. André noted that the Bois de Boulogne had a scenic body of water of an irregular shape. However, he preferred the body of water included in Prospect Park New York. André called the lining of the lake in Prospect Park "shredded", giving it a completely uneven aesthetic.<sup>120</sup> André's preference for a shredded style over his predecessor's irregular shaping of the lake shows what Andre sometimes called "*très-irrégulier*". It is a style that moves past irregular and into an extreme of land manipulation that incorporated an immense amount of detailing the placement of plants, rocks, and the shredded edges. Given that André considered Prospect Park an example of this *très*

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 347.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 453.

*irrégulier* style, he affirms that Olmsted had innovated landscape architecture past Alphand. This new style of landscape architecture, an evolution of the *irrégulier* style that Alphand utilized, indicates that landscape architecture did reflect governmental regimes. Andre had to change the landscape designs of his predecessor to represent the Third French Republic, which consisted of the *très-irrégulier* style.

Alphand and André both valued and evolved aesthetics in park design in France, though in different manners. Alphand, more similar to Olmsted, utilized practicality as a means for incorporating greenspaces into cityscapes. Concerned for the health of citizens, he aimed for public salubrity, or health, through the liberal circulating of air. Later, and upon reflection, Alphand wrote on aesthetics alone, fascinated by the intricacies of designing bodies of water. Andre took a completely different tone in his work than Alphand, preferring to focus on aesthetics and not necessarily the pragmatic purposes behind aesthetic designs. André considered Olmsted and Vaux to have advanced landscape architecture in the United States. André specifically took two design features of Olmsted and Vaux. The first, isolating park walkways from city streets, allowing for the visitors' uninterrupted experience of the park ambiance. The second, the shredded border design of bodies of water within parks, which exemplified his new *très-irrégulier* style. By utilizing designs from the United States, André was able to advance his thinking of aesthetics beyond having a pragmatic purpose of accessibility, education, and salubrity. These pragmatic designs had been incorporated by Olmsted, Vaux, and Alphand into the basic framework of park design.

The development of aesthetics in landscape design by Olmsted and Vaux in the United States prompted an international exchange of ideas with Édouard André. Olmsted professionalized his own abilities in landscape architecture by working on school grounds, disability centers, and city parks. In designing the school grounds, Olmsted needed to create practical applications that fostered educational pursuits, generally for land grant colleges. In his efforts, he displayed a support for socio-economic class differentiation. He also realized the necessity of exercise in maintaining a healthful lifestyle and avoiding illness. In his aims for pragmatism, Olmsted created accessible landscape grounds with liberal spatial features. Olmsted incorporated these same designs in his city parks, intending for the aesthetics to be viewed by many people. He furthered this by idea by extending streets and placing parks where intersections of railways and streets crossed. Olmsted compounded the meaning of aesthetics and accessibility, effectively

creating a space of democratically displayed aesthetics. The parks represented Olmsted perceived ideal of what groups of people (students, patients, and city-dwellers) needed. Alphand's view on aesthetics more heavily emphasized the Second French Empire, while consisting of concerns for public salubrity. André displayed an enthusiasm for aesthetics for their own merit, incorporating designs from Olmsted, Vaux, and Alphand. Due to the creation of these landscape designs being based in pragmatism reflecting accessibility, education, and salubrity, André's furthering of aesthetics thought on parks has its foundations in these causes.

### **CHAPTER 3.     LANDSCAPE SYNCRETISM: A TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY OF COOPERATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF GREENSPACES IN THE AMERICAN COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION IN CHICAGO, 1889 - 1894**

In 1892, Frederick Law Olmsted, the American landscape architect responsible for wonders such as Central Park and Prospect Park in New York, wrote a letter to Édouard André, a French landscape architect. In that letter, Olmsted urged André to come to Chicago for preparation of the American Columbian Exposition.<sup>121</sup> Olmsted, the head landscape architect, along with Henry Sargent Codman, of the exposition, saw the event as an opportunity to create a landscape featuring the best of French and American designs. André neglected to come to the exposition himself, though he sent Maurice de Vilmorin to design the greenspaces. Vilmorin, a French horticulturalist, designed multiple greenspaces at the exposition, with liberal inclusion of imported French flowers, vegetable plants, and trees. Vilmorin, though not a landscape architect, embodied in the exposition the French and American cooperation in the ascension of the art of landscape architecture across Europe and the Americas.

This chapter addresses French influence in the making of the greenspaces included in the American Columbian Exposition, including Jackson Park, horticulture expositions, and to some extent agriculture expositions. Structurally, this paper is written as a transnational history, noting specific points of relation between French and American landscape architects. The Colombian Exposition acted as a culmination of efforts from Olmsted and André as a development in transatlantic park design and cooperation. Through the horticulturalist Vilmorin, the exposition illuminated the parallel progression of horticulture in relation to landscape architecture. Olmsted also utilized the exposition to train his younger colleagues and family members, Henry Codman, John Olmsted, and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr, creating a hereditary linkage within the profession. Olmsted, with the help of André and Vilmorin secured the longevity of landscape architecture as a discipline by showcasing landscape architecture as a development between the nations of France and the United States, by aligning it with the study of horticulture, and by training younger American landscape architects in French and American landscape aesthetics.

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<sup>121</sup> David Schuyler and Gregory Kaliss, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume IX: The Last Great Projects, 1890-1895* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 475.

Olmsted and André had a pre-established friendship and working relationship prior to the designing of Jackson Park at the Columbian Exposition. The two met earlier in André's career, when he toured parts of the Americas to gain a larger perspective on park-making and design outside of his native France. Upon returning to France, André established his career as a landscape architect in the wider European region, building parks in Luxembourg and Italy. He also penned his monumental work, *L'Art des Jardins*, which built on previous works regarding the aesthetics of landscape architecture. André's French predecessors in landscape design influenced the work. However, André showed particular fondness for Olmsted's works on Central Park and Prospect Park in New York. He cited the walkways and bridges in the parks, additions that made the parks more accessible and allowed for easy movement.<sup>122</sup> The two landscape architects influenced one another in their landscapes and written works, rapidly developing their discipline.

During the design preparation for Jackson Park in Chicago, Olmsted's landscape architecture firm went through a transition of people. He hoped to train his stepson and son in landscape architecture. His stepson, John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920), already worked at Olmsted's architectural firm during the exposition as a landscape architect. Olmsted's biological son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (1870-1957), accompanied his father on his trip to France.<sup>123</sup> While Frederick Olmsted Jr. did not show particular interest in his father's line of work during the voyage, he did enter the profession later. The Codman family, another notable family within the Olmsted architectural firm during the planning of the exposition, included the brothers Henry Sargent Codman (1864-1893) and Phillip Codman (1867-1893).<sup>124</sup> The two brothers were nephews of the famous botanist at the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University, Charles Sprague Sargent (DOB). Henry Codman, the older brother, worked as landscape architect during the exposition. Phillip Codman went with both Olmsted and his son to France, also for the purpose of learning about landscape architecture.<sup>125</sup> Both the Olmsted and Codman families were integral to this pivotal moment in the development in landscape architecture.

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<sup>122</sup> Édouard André, *L'Art des Jardins: Traité Général de la composition des Parcs et Jardins*. (Paris, 1879), vi.

<sup>123</sup> A note on names: The Olmsted name will refer to three different people in this paper. As Frederick Law Olmsted (Sr.) features into a large portion of the paper he will still be referred to simply as "Olmsted." His stepson will only be shortened to "John Olmsted" and his son, because he was a Jr. will simply be referred to as "Olmsted Jr."

<sup>124</sup> A note on names: The Codman name refers to two people in this paper. Due to this, both Henry Codman and Phillip Codman will be referred to with their first and last name.

<sup>125</sup> Schuyler and Kaliss, *The Last Great Works*, 521.

### 3.1 French Influence on the Columbian Exposition

French influence on the greenspaces of the Columbian Exposition happened in several ways, but the most readily apparent in Olmsted's notes on the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1889. The *Exposition Universelle* landed on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the French Revolution and celebrated the revolutionary and republican identity France had developed since then. This fascination with identity also figured into the design of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. However, though the expositions largely operated to display the progress and identity for the respective nations, Olmsted primarily shifted his focus on how the grounds of the exposition looked and what kind of atmosphere they created. From his tour of the *Exposition Universelle*, Olmsted gathered comparative information to structure his concerns for the Columbian Exposition. André, who personally gave Olmsted the tour of the *Exposition Universelle* also stayed in contact with Olmsted in a quasi-advisory role during the design of the Columbian Exposition. French influence first reached the Columbian Exposition through Olmsted seeking inspiration and advice from André.

National and local identities are showcased at the World's Fairs. Rydall expands in his works (noted above) how these fairs symbolized the industrial, scientific, or cultural progress in the respective nation. Cassell and Karlowicz demonstrate how unions and local city planners, such as Burnham, represent the local identity of the fair. While these historians indicate nationalistic and localized fixations and representations, Olmsted did not demonstrate admiration for these aspects of the French and American expositions. He wrote about the display fountains in the expositions as report to the partners on Exposition Universelle on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1892, "I am not pleased with the sculptural boat fountain and the head of the basin and am disposed to regret that we have a similar boat design, however different the allegory and the composition of figures."<sup>126</sup> The fountains that Olmsted referred to are *The City of Paris, on her Barge Environed by Science, Industry, Agriculture, and Art, Enlightening the World with Flambeau* by Jules-Félix Coutan in France and the *Columbian Fountain* by Frederick MacMonnies in the United States.<sup>127</sup> The French fountain carried a localized and nationalistic tone. The female figure in the sculpture personified Paris as a success of science, agriculture, and art. A hundred years after the 1789 French Revolution, the sculpture suggested a national and localized recovery from the violence and

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<sup>126</sup> Schuyler and Kaliss, *The Last Great Works*, 510.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 511-512.

uncertainty of the revolution. The American fountain idolized Christopher Columbus and his voyage to the Americas, for which the Columbian Exposition was named after. The fountain illustrated nationalistic tones of exploration, progress, and expansionism. Though the fairs incorporated these nationalistic fountains, Olmsted largely regarded them with annoyance at best, and at worst, disgust. Given Olmsted's dismissal of the nationalistic fountains and his preoccupation with landscaping techniques from France, he showed himself allied with a world's fair that showcases global pride, rather than national or local.

Olmsted's noted on the *Exposition Universelle* carried both a lauding and critical tone, specifically on the grounds themselves. The land that the Columbian Exposition, Jackson Park, represented a particularly critical piece of the larger exposition, because Olmsted intended the park as a permanent structure. Developing Jackson Park proved to be an arduous task for Olmsted. He wrote to André on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1892 "The several sites available [for the exposition] were all unpromising... Our argument for it [Jackson Park] was simply that it was bordered by the lake, the only natural feature of scenery of interest near the city."<sup>128</sup> Initiating the difficult task of cultivating the grounds for Jackson Park, Olmsted took a trip to Europe, England and France specifically. While in France, during the tour André gave him of the *Exposition Universelle*, Olmsted wrote how delighted he was to see that a large amount of the exposition remained in 1892, three years after the exposition.<sup>129</sup> This realization enthused Olmsted, who sought a similar goal in the United States: to create a lasting structure, though from the infertile and problematic land of what would become Jackson Park.

Though Olmsted needed to cultivate the land through much work, André helped by providing the necessary enthusiasm and advice for the potential of Jackson Park. In Olmsted's report on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1892, he wrote, "André referred with animation of the island [in Jackson Park] wholly used for landscape effect, and Vilmorin said that he had seen is stated that the island was to be wholly assigned to a display of Japanese gardening."<sup>130</sup> The land still did not have ornamentation or fertility, a similar problem that landscape architects for the *Exposition Universelle* battled. André predicted that without additions of plants and other forms or ornamentations, the entire exhibition would have a deteriorated affect. As a solution, André

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 475.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 509.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 512-513.

ordered palms from Southern France to decorate the exhibition, giving a fuller atmosphere. He suggested the same solution for Jackson Park in Chicago, though also noted that the availability of palms in France may be low and instead to look for the trees in the Mediterranean as a whole. For Jackson Park, André also recommended the inclusion of plant-filled vases along the parapets for the same reason.<sup>131</sup> Olmsted wrote all these suggestion from André, addressing the seriousness of the lack of ornamentation and full atmosphere the exhibition required. Olmsted favored André's opinion due to their friendship, but also because André had been involved with the showing of a World's Fair before and had solved many aspects of problematic grounds. By taking advice from André, Olmsted infused the Columbian Exposition with similar aesthetics of the *Exposition Universelle*, such as the inclusion of palms and plant-filled vases.

Olmsted, in his viewing of the *Exposition Universelle*, also took minor details that informed his preferences for the grounds and the atmosphere he aimed to build. Not all of these preferences were in positive reception of the French exposition. Olmsted wrote in the same report that he found the turf of poor quality, which led him to prefer either gravel or brick in parts of Jackson Park.<sup>132</sup> This preference also likely referred to Olmsted's desire of making Jackson Park a permanent structure, and in doing so he needed to include sturdy walkways that could outlive the American exposition. When considering the general atmosphere of the French exposition site, Olmsted noted the buildings included were less ornamental than what he expected. He appreciated the style of lesser ornamentation because the buildings detracted less attention away from the grounds themselves. Once coming to this realization, Olmsted wrote in his report that he would prefer if the Columbian Exposition took the same lesser ornamentation approach.<sup>133</sup> Olmsted did not have authority over the architectural designs of the buildings included in the Columbian Exposition, though he constructed grounds that had a civilizing effect on the fair visitors. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* wrote in an article in 1895, after the exposition, "Four years ago and more, Frederick Law Olmsted waved a wand over its dark morasses and tho waters were divided from the water. From chaos sprang a city that was a world's wonder."<sup>134</sup> However, his notes on the architecture in the *Exposition Universelle* remain integral to understanding Olmsted's vision for the Columbian

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 518.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 510.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 510.

<sup>134</sup> "Reconstruction of Jackson Park," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), Oct. 6, 1895.



Exposition and how he viewed landscape architecture as working in tandem with buildings architecture to create a conjoined landscape and atmosphere.

A critical preference that Olmsted strengthened in his visit to France was his desire for diverse forms of watercraft in the lagoon in Jackson Park. Olmsted and Burnham engaged in a long-winded debate over the inclusion of watercraft. Originally displeased with the inclusion of watercraft Olmsted wrote to Burnham on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1891, that boats “should be regarded as a value incidentally occurring from their use, primarily, as a means of advancing the main artistic motive of the general design.”<sup>135</sup> Olmsted follows this in the same letter with of his hope that the boats will “appear adapted to glide quietly and naturally across the scene...needless to add that it would be infinitely better to have no boats at all.”<sup>136</sup> Though Olmsted resigned himself to understanding the fair would include boats, he wrote to Burnham on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1892 that the fair should include electric boats, gondolas, and canoes.<sup>137</sup> While in France, Phillip Codman, one of Olmsted’s apprentices wrote in the “Memorandum on Exposition Universelle and the Chateau Loire,” on May 1<sup>ST</sup>, 1892, that in his visit to Chantilly, Blois, and Chambord, “my convictions that I have constantly expressed, of the necessity of getting watercraft of various kinds to fill out the basins and lagoons, are strengthened by what I have seen.”<sup>138</sup> The majority of the report was in quotation marks, indicating Codman penned the memorandum as a record of Olmsted’s thoughts while visiting the greenspaces in France. Upon viewing these greenspaces in France Olmsted, Codman, or both fully affirmed their notions about including diverse watercraft in the exposition. To increase the quietness of the watercraft in the lagoon, Olmsted suggested electric launches for the boats. The Chicago Daily Tribune positively reported this decision, stating “in pursuing this course, the exposition has every reason to feel gratified with the results as well as Mr. Olmsted, because all day yesterday a fleet of thirty-five of these launches skimmed noiselessly through the waters of the lagoon and canal with perfect success.”<sup>139</sup> The diverse inclusion of boats and electric launches represent an amalgamation of French and American design, as Olmsted found similar diverse watercraft in France and made suggestions to allow the boats to remain quiet, instead of becoming a spectacle themselves.

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 435.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 436.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 490.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 520.

<sup>139</sup> “Arrival at the Grounds: Magnificent Spectacle Presented by the Procession as it enters the Grounds,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), May 2, 1893.

Olmsted gained positive and negative inspiration from the *Exposition Universelle*, other French landscapes, and through his connection with André. Olmsted found affirmation in André for the choosing of Jackson Park based on its view of Lake Michigan, something André considered indispensable for landscape. Upon viewing the grounds, Olmsted found comfort in seeing the endurance in the grounds at the *Exposition Universelle*. He sought to replicate a similar longevity within the making of Jackson Park. André, who gave Olmsted the tour of the grounds, also advised Olmsted on the inclusion of palm trees and plant-filled vases to mitigate the bareness of the land. Olmsted and André both feared this lack of ornamentation of the grounds would inhibit the fullness of the atmosphere showcased during the Columbian Exposition. Noting his dislikes of the French grounds at the *Exposition Universelle* which he considered to have poor turf, Olmsted took into consideration a different method of walkways for Jackson Park made of gravel or brick. This also promoted the longevity of the park. Another aspect that Olmsted or Codman derived from other greenspaces in France was their want of diverse watercraft in the lagoon at Jackson Park. Though not all the preferences gained in Olmsted's visit to France were received in the final compilation of Jackson Park or the Columbian Exposition, French influence still added to his overall internal image of the park, developing landscape architecture in the United States.

### **3.2 French Horticulture and Greenspaces in the Columbian Exposition**

The horticulture exposition and certain greenspaces at the Columbian Exposition received much attention from the French horticulturalist, Maurice L. de Vilmorin. Such involvement from the French side partially came from Olmsted's anxiety about the United States having the capability to produce an adequate horticulture exposition. André enabled the haphazard French American partnership in the production of the horticulture exposition and the greenspaces. Vilmorin, with the guidance of André produced a larger portion of the greenspaces within the exposition, rivaling Olmsted's own involvement. Vilmorin also wrote the report on the *Exposition Universelle de Chicago en 1893/ Comité 8 L'Horticulture Française À Chicago*, detailing his contributions and insights regarding the Columbian Exposition. This section covers the direct French involvement in the Columbian Exposition, rather than the influence Olmsted gained from France and André. The French involvement in the Columbian Exposition displayed the international efforts between France and the United States in the development of landscape architecture.

Within this sphere of influence between the nations in landscape architecture, France historically cultivated the growth of botany. Louis XIII of France first established the *Jardin du Roi* in 1629 for medicinal purposes. The *jardin* or garden existed with this royal title until the French Revolution. The French naturalists working within the garden enjoyed support through the patronage system.<sup>140</sup> During this time, botany in France expanded from a purely medicinal pursuit for the monarchy and into an interest in the sciences. The ages of exploration and colonization brought new opportunities for discovery (and study) of new plants and animals. Emma Spary argues in *Utopia's Garden: French National history from Old Regime to Revolution*, that during the French Revolution the *Jardin de Roi* evolved into the *Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle* to survive the destruction of institutions affiliated with the Bourbon Monarchy.<sup>141</sup> Spary displayed the successful adaptability of the French scientists associated with the *jardin/muséum*. In this adaptability, the scientists highlight the adaptability of their discipline. The study of botany went through several phases in French history, including medicinal, explorative, colonialist, and agricultural. The multiple phases botany went through in France, and over the course of differentiated governmental regimes, indicates the durability of the discipline in French history and culture which also lent itself to the development of landscape design. While André culturally and professionally knew of the importance of botany to his profession, Olmsted lacked formal training in botany or horticulture and the United States did not have the longstanding historical connection to botany comparable to France. The cultural significance of botany in France and in connection to French landscape architecture made the horticulturalist exhibit the most impactful French influence in the Columbian Exposition.

In Olmsted's vision of constructing Jackson Park and the rest of the grounds for the exposition, he hoped to be aided by his friend, André. Vilmorin, in truth, was Olmsted's second choice for the French aid he requested. In one of Olmsted's letters to his superiors in the exposition, he indicated his wish for André to design the grounds for the women's building at the exposition. He even went on to add that the grounds "shall not strike them as less refined or less admirable in execution and maintenance than that which shall have been done by the Frenchman."<sup>142</sup> Here, Olmsted clarified that the grounds could not be better tended by anyone else in the United States,

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<sup>140</sup> Emma Spary. *Utopia's Gardens: French Natural History from Old Regime to Revolution*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 49.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 607.

except for perhaps himself. While André designed some of the grounds from France and addressed some of Olmsted's concerns by mail or during their visit to France, he neglected to come to the United States and sent Vilmorin in his place.

Vilmorin's primary role in the exposition was as the President of the French Horticulture Committee. In his report, *Exposition Universelle de Chicago en 1893/ Comité 8 L'Horticulture Française À Chicago*, Vilmorin outlined his responsibilities, who he works with, what France contributes to the exposition, and what France could gain from the exposition. Published in France in the French language, Vilmorin's report primarily targeted a French audience rather than American. The report carries a tone of conviction, defending the importance for the French participation in the Columbian Exposition which explains why he notes potential French gains from the exposition. He also profusely indicated his own contribution and therefore French contributions to the exposition. Vilmorin's responsibilities cover the interior of the *Palais de l'Horticulture* (with the exception of viticulture, or the cultivation of grapes), the land east and west of the *Palais*, adding floral designs to Jackson Park, the wooded area of the island in the lagoon, the extremities of Midway Plaisance, and the exterior of the Women's Buildings.<sup>143</sup> Vilmorin displayed awareness of his own contribution to the exposition, with the inclusion of a table in his report detailing the square miles that the French designed, adding up to 12,130 square meters.<sup>144</sup> This breakdown of French contributions is particularly helpful in understanding the full significance of the French partnership with the United States in the Columbian Exposition. It shows the full transition of the transnational relationship between France and the United States in phases of influence, conversation, and international cooperation.

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<sup>143</sup> Maurice Vilmorin. *Exposition Internationale de C. en 1893.* "Rapports Publiés sous la direction de C. Krantz. Comité 8. L'horticulture française à Chicago; l'horticulture aux Etats-Unis. (France, 1894), 8.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 15.



HORTICULTURE BUILDING.

Figure 2: The photographic representation of the Horticulture Building included in the *Official Guide to the Grounds and Buildings of the World's Columbian Exposition during Construction*.<sup>145</sup>

Vilmorin further noted both the disdain and respect he formed for the United States during his tenure in the exposition. Regarding horticulture, Vilmorin remarked, “there is a lack of interest in horticulture, which is quite general in the rich class of the United States.”<sup>146</sup> Of course, this remark contains bias for the French horticulture over the United States. While French horticulture has its roots in the study of botany, going back to the fifteenth century, the United States had some stature in the study as well. The Arnold Arboretum, a botanical research site at Harvard University was established in 1872, twenty years prior to Vilmorin’s commentary on what he considered an inadequate horticultural society in the United States. With this noted, the *Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle* predated the Arnold Arboretum by two centuries (though under the name of

<sup>145</sup> World’s Columbian Exposition (1893: Chicago, Ill.). *Official Guide to the Grounds and Buildings of the World’s Columbian Exposition during Construction* Chicago: World’s Columbian Exposition, department Publicity and Promotion; Rand, McNally and Co., 1892.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

*Jardin de Roi*), enough to give Vilmorin reason to question the adequacy of United States horticultural abilities in comparison to the French. Even with Vilmorin's reservations about the state of horticulture in the United States, particularly around the upper class, he wrote on the exposition's agricultural show, "For the exposition of fruits the cite in Chicago is not unfavorable... They present a real interest. We cannot say however, that for all the good reception of the fruits and vegetables, Chicago is much better situated than New York or Philadelphia."<sup>147</sup> Vilmorin's assertion about the American agricultural exposition shows his respect for some aspects of American science. His comparing Chicago agriculture with that of New York and Philadelphia is interesting because he neglects to compare the agricultural show to France. He allowed for the idea that the United States carries enough stature to be judged in relation to itself. This positive glance at a portion of American horticulture insinuates Vilmorin's opinion that the Americans displayed skillful tending to practical agricultural pursuits and lacked the ability to see horticulture as an art and science.

Vilmorin's opinion on American horticulture also seeped into his views on American landscape architecture. While Vilmorin indicated that he worked under the advice of Olmsted and Henry Codman, he also stated that the landscape department is dependent on the horticulture department.<sup>148</sup> Given Vilmorin's opinions on American horticulture as a sub-par discipline, it is also likely that he considered the landscape architecture of Olmsted to be in a similar category. Ascertaining from Vilmorin's commentary on the American horticulture, landscape, and Olmsted's uneasiness with working with him, there exists an underlying rivalry between the French and American landscape architects/horticulturalists displayed at the Columbian Exposition. It does not appear that the rivalry pre-dated the exposition within Olmsted and André's friendship, but perhaps the exposition itself brought out the need for each nation's representatives to showcase further development than the other. Though the reasoning behind this rivalry remains unclear, French involvement in the Columbian Exposition came at the cost of uneasy relations between the landscape artists and horticulturalists.

Even with uneasy relations, Vilmorin planned efficiently for the inclusion of French plants and designs within the exhibition. In his report, he noted that the vegetables needed to leave in February and wrote extensively on how to transport the plants properly so they would not die on

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 7.

the voyage.<sup>149</sup> He also showed incredible detail in the trees and other plants featured in the exposition. He imported palm, ficus, fern trees to put in the open air of the grounds to give an effect of “elemental color decoration.”<sup>150</sup> To fulfil his duty in ornamenting the exposition with flowering plants, Vilmorin followed André’s guidance and chose rhododendrons, a genus of shrubs, some of which are native to the United States. Vilmorin also designed the formation of the different fruit trees displayed along the Midway Palais, including pear trees, apple trees, cherry trees, and plum trees. Arranged in a linear and unnatural style, Vilmorin utilized the French vocabulary of landscaping in this form, the *style régulier*.<sup>151</sup> The French landscape architects, including André had previously moved away from this style towards the *style irrégulier*. However, Vilmorin chose this style because of the need for the vegetable trees to receive adequate air and sunlight to produce fruits.<sup>152</sup> The importation of plants and designs that Vilmorin oversaw indicate more of a direct contribution of the French to the exposition rather than an underlying French influence, outside of usage of vocabulary and plants imports. This utilization of foreign plants and animals also links back to Olmsted’s affirmative belief that no American would do better than “the Frenchman”, which for Olmsted indicated André. Yet, Vilmorin’s wide-ranging capability of landscape architecture, plants curation, and ability to import still represented a “Frenchman” to do the job. Vilmorin’s actions in these subjects still showcase Olmsted’s broad desires for the exposition, to combine French and American talent at Jackson Park.

The French also received space to present their own exposition presenting their *art des jardins*. Vilmorin featured photographs of André’s work on landscapes in France, Luxembourg, Liverpool, and Monte-Carlo. He wrote that these photographs would be appreciated by French and American landscape architects. In the context of presenting French landscape architecture, Vilmorin suggested that landscape architecture in the United States is a serious study.<sup>153</sup> This statement contrasts sharply with Vilmorin’s previous negative remarks on the study of horticulture in the United States, which also reflects pessimism onto landscape architecture because of its dependence on the horticulture discipline. Vilmorin wrote contrasting opinions on American

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 19 and 25.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 31.

landscaping and horticultural studies, indicating that his own uncertain thoughts on American aptitude in such disciplines.

Vilmorin's changing assessment on the studies of horticulture and landscape architecture in the United States hints at the developmental period in those disciplines within the nation. He wrote, "Americans are developing their tastes for an educated and civilized society."<sup>154</sup> This takeaway, mostly positive, correlates with the landscape movement in the United States. Calvert Vaux, Olmsted's architectural partner in Central Park also wrote on how the American tastes were lacking and how he desired to improve it.<sup>155</sup> Vaux further relayed his observation of American's having a love for the country and that the farms in the country "form a well-balanced irregularity."<sup>156</sup> Vaux, having been at the forefront of landscape architecture in the United States with Olmsted, knew that development of tastes would be a necessary to raise the United States in the eyes of Europeans. Vilmorin exemplified the exact situation Vaux prepared for in the making of landscapes in the United States, a European observer posing judgment on American stature in the arts and sciences. Further into the writing of his report, Vilmorin argued, "it is in the interest of a European to assist the blossoming of a young and powerful nation, and it is agreeable for a Frenchman, who is called by familial traditions, to take deep interests in horticultural matters [internationally]."<sup>157</sup> This notion represented the change of inclinations Vilmorin held towards the United States and their "tastes". Vilmorin considered it an extension of French horticultural studies to aid the United States in the development of the field. Instead of simply considering the American disciplines in horticulture and landscape architecture inadequate, he realized they are developing. From this perspective, Vilmorin considered that helping the United States would be best for France.

Vilmorin's aspiration to aid the United States, at least in the exposition, may also have been derived from his own personal curiosity. Out of necessity, Vilmorin had to learn the climate, soil, and natural plants of the Mid-Western region of the United States. He made note of the different fruit trees from Europe that the farmers in the United States grew, if their soil and climate permitted. Included in that list were the pear, apple, cherry, and apricot trees, among many others.<sup>158</sup> In this section of Vilmorin's report he took painstakingly detailed notes on the trees, how and where they

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>155</sup> Calvert Vaux. *Villas and Cottages. A series of designs prepared for execution in the United States* (New York (State): Harper & Brothers, 1864), 29.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 27 and 51.

<sup>157</sup> Vilmorin. *L'horticulture*, 48.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 52.



survived, and their natural history. He did this again with two other subjects: vegetables and flowers. The vegetables he took notes generally on them, noting their nativity status and natural history.<sup>159</sup> On the floriculture (the cultivation of flowers), Vilmorin wrote that “France developed the study, but the United States showed rapid development in the area.”<sup>160</sup> From these notes, Vilmorin indicated his wish to learn the natural climate and the horticultural pursuits within the United States. Vilmorin also gave an animated response to the *Chicago Daily Tribune* prior to his project. The article reads, “Maurice L. Vilmorin of Paris, reputed to be the most noted and scientific horticulturalist in France, writes that he is deeply interested in making the grounds about the French Pavilion a spot of great beauty.”<sup>161</sup> By aiding the United States in horticultural studies and taking notes for French horticulturalists, Vilmorin linked the development of French and American horticulture.

Through the aid of Vilmorin in overseeing the horticultural exposition, French exposition of the art of gardens, and some of the greenspace designs in the Columbian Exposition, he created both a rivalry and cooperation in the growth of horticulture and landscape architecture in France and the United States. Vilmorin started his work with Olmsted on the exposition with an air of uneasiness between the two, potentially due to Olmsted’s hope for working with André. However, Olmsted’s anxiety about American horticulturalists obtaining an adequate horticultural exposition allowed him to realize his need of Vilmorin’s expertise in horticulture. Vilmorin also helped construct a vast portion of the grounds at the exposition, adding up to 12,130 square meters. For the rest of the exposition, he busied himself with the floral additions to combat the bareness Olmsted and André wrote concerningly about. Through this process of working the American landscape architects, Olmsted and Codman, and seeing the development of horticulture in the United States, Vilmorin considered it necessary to help their growth in horticulture (which he found landscape architecture to be dependent on). In Vilmorin’s aid to the United States in the study of horticulture and therefore landscape architecture, he enabled himself to learn about the climate and differentiations in horticulture of the United States, expanding on previous French research. All of these examples of cooperation between the United States and France during the

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>161</sup> “Exposition Notes,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), Mar. 6, 1892.

exposition show a newfound transnational connection to further development in horticulture and landscape architecture.

### 3.3 The Co-Creation of Landscape Architecture as a Discipline

Olmsted utilized the Columbian Exposition to create a secure longevity for landscape architecture as a discipline in the United States. To do this, he asked for the French aid, given to him by André and Vilmorin. The forged alliance between the French and American landscape architects enabled them to jointly conceive of a better product for Jackson Park and the horticulture exposition. Olmsted also took the opportunity during the preparation for the exposition to train what he believed would be the next generation of his architectural firm, Olmsted Jr. and Phillip Codman. Lastly, Olmsted displayed a refinement of his views on landscape architecture, indicating that the profession carried more responsibility than simple cultivation of the grounds. Olmsted's usage of French talents, teaching landscape architecture to young professionals, and further refinement of his own conception of his profession indicate a desire to further establish landscape architecture in the United States.

Olmsted first disclosed his anxiety about the longevity of landscape architecture in the United States in his letter to André. He asked André about the terminology of landscape architecture in France in his letter to him on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1892, noted that in the United States he was still “ridiculed” when he utilized the term. Olmsted referred to the French term utilized, *Architecte Paysagiste*. He then commented that the term held more merit in France because another French landscape architect responsible for the Versailles Gardens, André Le Nôtre (1613-1700), was associated with the term.<sup>162</sup> Much as Vilmorin viewed American horticulture as inferior to the French, partially due to the youthful foundations of the discipline in the United States, Olmsted feared the same thoughts would be attributed to landscape architecture. The French monarchy began the process of cultivating the studies of botany and landscape architecture in the fifteenth century. By connecting their studies and practices to their own national history, it allowed for a natural continuation, and therefore André lacked the same fear that Olmsted had about the terminology of “landscape architecture”. In noting this subject of the foundation, the French had in landscape architecture while also asking André to help design the grounds for the exposition,

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<sup>162</sup> Olmsted, *The Last Great Works*, 475-476.

Olmsted insinuated his plan to connect American and French landscape architecture. This connection would award American landscape architects with the foundation and merit already built by the French.

After (almost) thirty years of practicing, Olmsted also needed to create and train a new group of people to work as landscape architects. By the time of the exposition, Henry Codman and John Olmsted worked under Olmsted at his architect firm. In his letters, he detailed the troublesome time he experiences while in France attempting to teach his own son, Olmsted Jr. and Phillip Codman. Though difficult, in taking them to France to learn, Olmsted verified his intention of linking French and American landscape architecture, likely to give foundational merit to the craft. During the visit to France, Olmsted wrote letters to his wife, Mary Olmsted, Henry Codman, and John Olmsted about the progress in teaching his young apprentices. To Mary on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1892, he wrote that “Phillip is zealous, and his tastes and intuitions are excellent.”<sup>163</sup> To John on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1892, he continued the description, stating that Phillip is “almost morbidly industrious”.<sup>164</sup> Of Olmsted Jr, Olmsted described his son as “much more boyish” (in comparison to Phillip) and that he is “slower and less vigilant in catching such opportunities as Phillip”.<sup>165</sup> Though Olmsted applied criticism towards the two young apprentices, because of his anxiety of the longevity of American landscape architecture, this criticism is simply another symptoms of Olmsted’s underlying anxiety. Olmsted also followed these criticisms with his own self-criticism, wondering if he had done all he could to teach his son and Phillip.<sup>166</sup> This worry about teaching a new generation of landscape architects shows Olmsted’s larger concern about the continuation of American landscape architecture after himself.

Olmsted’s choice in apprentices notes another transition in landscape architecture in the United States. In choosing his son, Olmsted Jr. and Phillip Codman, the younger brother of Henry Codman, Olmsted crystalized his intention of making landscape architecture a hereditary position. Olmsted already started this process with his elder son, John Olmsted and Phillip’s older brother Henry. These four individuals mark the specification of the labor through familial lines, invoking further distinction in socio-economic class lines by practicing nepotism. Marx and Engels wrote in *The German Ideology*, “the class which has the means of material force of society, is at the same

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 522.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 524.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 522 and 524.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 524.

time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.”<sup>167</sup> Olmsted, by virtue of being a landscape architect, was a member of the “ruling intellectual force” due to his ability to control the design of material forces in the form of parks with his own intellectual learnings. In continuing this and fermenting the status of his family and discipline, he supported the furthering of specialization of professions and division of labor in the United States.

During the planning of the exposition, Olmsted also began to understand his job as an atmosphere-builder rather than just what the name “landscape architect” implied. On this matter he wrote to Rudolph Ulrich, another landscape architect involved with the exposition, on Mar. 11<sup>th</sup>, 1893, “never lose sight of the fact that our special responsibility as landscape artists applies primarily to the broad, comprehensive scenery of the exposition. This duty is not to make a garden, or to produce garden effects, but relates to the scenery of the exposition as a whole.”<sup>168</sup> Here, Olmsted differentiated his job from that of gardeners, clarifying that landscape “artists” must take into account the surrounding scenery, almost as if providing a reaction to other architectural endeavors within close proximity to the grounds. An example of Olmsted practicing this atmospheric relief is in his plan to plant trees of dark green foliage to offset the buildings of the “white city”.<sup>169</sup> In adjusting to the other architecture designs in buildings, Olmsted demonstrated that landscape architecture can be utilized as a reactionary force and a way to balance features from the culmination of building and landscape designs. Olmsted’s undertaking of evening the architectural and landscape architectural projects appeared pleasing to fair visitors. An article reviewing the exposition wrote, “the degree in which the landscape dominated the architecture is very remarkable. For the structures so enormous in size the principal Exposition buildings are extremely unobtrusive. This is a triumph for the architects as well as the landscape architects.”<sup>170</sup> This critical praise affirms Olmsted’s self-appointed responsibility to even the atmosphere through his landscape design. As Olmsted takes on the position of balancing architectural designs, he also implied his responsibility in the making of the overall atmosphere of the exposition.

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<sup>167</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology: Parts I and III* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), 39.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 605.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 606.

<sup>170</sup> J. B. Harrison, “Review of the fair: A Critical Observer Records Some of His Opinion,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), Oct. 8, 1893.

The Columbian Exposition was an event that happened close to the end of Olmsted's career, which caused the event to provide a fulfilment in the creation of a long-sustaining practice in landscape architecture. Olmsted revealed his anxiety about the lack of respect landscape architecture garnered in the United States. He believed the French did not have the same problem due to their historic landscape architecture in Versailles. To safeguard American landscape architecture from falling out of practice, Olmsted sought to link American and French landscape architecture during the exposition. Furthering this French and American landscape connection, Olmsted took Olmsted Jr. and Phillip Codman to France in hopes of teaching them about landscape architecture. Through Olmsted's criticism of his two apprentices, his anxiety for the future of landscape architecture becomes clearly stated in his efforts to teach them about his craft. Even through these anxieties about the longevity of American landscape architecture, Olmsted still sought to further define his profession. He viewed landscape architecture as a necessary feature to balance the building architecture, thus noting that landscape architects claim responsibility for the overall atmosphere created in unison with both types of architects.

American and French landscape architects and horticulturalists worked in tandem to construct and design the greenspaces of the Columbian Exposition. French aid to Olmsted came in the form of influence, direct designs in the horticulture exposition and some grounds, and Olmsted's attempt to link American and French landscape architecture to ensure longevity of the profession in the United States. Olmsted first sought the help of his friend and fellow landscape architect, André. The French landscape architect failed to come to Chicago to personally oversee any designs, but he did influence Olmsted by giving him tours of the *Exposition Universelle* and other grounds in France. Olmsted took from his trip in France affirmations in his own preferences through critiques and praises of the French grounds. André also did design some grounds but sent the horticulturalist, Vilmorin to Chicago in his place to oversee their construction. Vilmorin designed the majority of the horticulture exposition and wrote extensively on the French contribution to the exposition. He noted the dependency of landscape architecture on horticulture, effectively showcasing the closeness of the two fields developing simultaneously. Realizing that landscape architecture had more stature in France than the United States due to its foundational history beginning in the fifteenth century, Olmsted hoped to connect French and American landscape architecture in the exposition. He also sought to teach his young apprentices, Olmsted

Jr. and Phillip Codman, through a combined approach of viewing both French and American landscapes.

## CONCLUSION

France and the United States saw landscape architecture follow certain paralleling steps in development. In both countries, the landscape architects adhered to political undertones and aesthetic desires for their park designs. However, Adolphe Alphand in France and Frederick Law Olmsted in the United States strove for their greenspaces to provide a salve for mental ailments, either the stress of governmental transitions in France or neurasthenia in the United States. Through the stages of development between the park architects on both sides of the Atlantic, Olmsted and Édouard André began building their parks in a more accessible manner. This included both placement of the parks and internal park designs such as walkways and spacial features. These developments fostered an international cooperation between France and the United States.

Urban parks designed in the nineteenth century in France and the United States marked a definitive shift from older gardens and parks in both countries. The new urban parks differed from their developmental predecessors because of their designed purpose of serving a wide range of people. In France, the monarchy held hunting grounds and gardens for their personal usage. It seems that there existed an inherent knowledge that people did need access to nature, given them importance of nature to the monarchy. The United States included a similar system of allowing more access to nature to people of higher socio-economic status with the advent of national parks. As William Cronon pointed out in “The Trouble with Wilderness,” only people of considerable socio-economic means can make the trip to national parks, which are often located far out of the city limits.<sup>171</sup> Though contemporary to the urban park movement, the formation of national parks served the higher socio-economic class of people and not necessarily city dwellers.

With gardens and parks administered in both countries for the monarchy or higher socio-economic classes, there left an opportunity to build parks for the express purpose of provisioning nature for people of differing socio-economic status. These spaces were open to the public, which set them apart from older French gardens and hunting grounds that constituted restricted areas. By building parks within the city limits, city planners and landscape architects constructed a natural space that existed near urban dwellers’ workplaces or homes, making them more accessible than the national parks in the United States. Landscape architects in both countries responded to the

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<sup>171</sup> William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” *Environmental History*, 1, no. 1 (1996): 21.

perceived need for city dwellers to have admittance into the world of nature, that previously were only allotted to the wealthy.

This shift in thinking about nature, considering it as a necessity to living, was integral to the professional development of Olmsted as a landscape architect. He looked beyond simply designing parks for cities, and developed greenspaces for insane asylums, centers for the deaf and blind, and land grant institutions. By designing greenspaces that served a variety of different people with differing abilities and sensitivities, Olmsted widened his perspective on what nature could potentially offer people. This understanding fed into his internal visions and design methods for city parks. After his work on other projects, such as designing greenspaces for these multiple institutions, he promoted accessibility and aesthetics as in city parks prominently, much more so than prior to diversifying his work. These features became a key aspect in both France and the United States, as France's Édouard André administered some of these same designs in Europe.

*The German Ideology* by Marx and Engels, helps to comprehend the difference between what Olmsted believed urban dwellers or people with ailments needed and what their needs may have been. Olmsted, who consistently wrote of his desire to aid the working class, did not comprehend what the working class desired or needed. His own personal mindspace limited what he could project onto his built landscapes, and he could only perceive what others' mindspaces might have held. In all his altruistic intentions, his visions largely remained stunted at an ideal. This is the reason why looking at the topic of the development of landscape architecture through a transnational lens has value. Even though landscape architects lacked the capacity to perceive park-goers' mindspaces, through one another's notes and designs, they stood a chance at understanding more than just their own. So, while this thesis shows the shortcomings of landscape architects perceiving the park-goers needs and desires, it also indicates that they sought to develop the craft through connecting their thoughts.

Transnational influence, conversation, and cooperation, allowed for the urban park movement to occur, rapidly develop, and attain longevity. It could be that without the connection between France and the United States both countries would have achieved the idea of implementing urban parks in their respective cities. However, it is difficult to know if those parks would have developed at the quickened pace or endured into modernity. Originally, the park design of both countries in the 1850s, related to the governmental styles of each country, though they both had underlying purposes of mentally soothing urban dwellers. Further into the development, in the



1860s and 1870s the United States shifted in favor aesthetics, healthfulness, and accessibility. The French soon made this value switch as well, with Édouard André *L'Art des Jardins* primarily focusing on beauty and “salubrity” or healthfulness. Finally, in 1893, André and Olmsted took part in the development of the grounds in Jackson Park, designed both for entertainment in the American Columbian Exposition, but also for the securement of international cooperation between France and the United States in landscape architecture.

All the major city parks mentioned in this thesis still exist in modernity. The Bois de Boulogne, Central Park, Prospect Park, and Jackson Park all still function for the purpose of providing city dwellers a place of nature within the city. Though the cost of living has skyrocketed in these areas and Manhattan, Brooklyn, Chicago, and Paris all can be considered cities where wealthy residents live, and tourists visit. These parks no longer cater to the socio-economic class of people for which they were originally built. Also due to the congestion of traffic in these cities, these parks cannot be considered easily accessible, even for urban dwellers. Long-term, they only loosely administer the mission that their designers intended. These shortcomings of the parks that revealed themselves over time reflect a symptom of the landscape architects’ inability to know the needs of lower socio-economic classes in the cities.

The chapters in this thesis are arranged thematically and for the most part, linearly. Each of the chapters showcase thematic influences and involvement between France and the United States that contributed to each country’s development in the design of their parks. This begins with Olmsted seeking assistance and influence from Alphand in France for the design of Central Park. The influence flips the other way when Édouard André considers Olmsted’s Central Park and Prospect Park designs for France and the larger European region. This international conversation on the development of landscape architectural design culminated in the combined effort in the design for Jackson Park in Chicago, a project in which both Olmsted and André participated.

The first primary influence between France and the United States derived from Olmsted’s trip to France to survey the grounds of the Bois de Boulogne, which proved prominent in his designs for Central Park and Prospect Park. Alphand built the Bois de Boulogne during the Haussmannization of Paris under the Second French Empire of Napoleon III. His designs featured aspects of the older *style regulier*, a highly organized and unnatural style of the French monarchy. Alphand also included elements of the *style irregulier*, a less strict style of landscape architecture. Combined, these two styles represented the new government of France, the empire. This stylistic

undertone can be seen in the design of walkways and drives, which took a grand and serpentine aesthetic, though without the symmetry of the older *style regulier*. Tree curation and arrangement implied imperialism via the inclusion of non-native trees and the placement of those trees in a largely organized manner. Olmsted and Vaux included similar plans to Alphand's for walkways and drives, even using the same measurements while citing the Bois de Boulogne as a reference. The tree curation and placement provided a differing notion from the French in that Olmsted included native trees, which veers into nationalism rather than the French imperialism.

Alphand and Olmsted also answered differing needs of the cities of Paris and New York. Paris still suffered from historical trauma from their multiple revolutions and instable governmental structures. Alphand undertook the task of balancing the *regulier* and *irregulier* styles to carefully construct a new form of public space that did not support the monarchy but also did not fully reject French nationalism. To do this, he incorporated these two styles to conform to the empire, creating a park that could act as a stabilizer to the city dwellers of Paris. Olmsted and Vaux concerned themselves with the mental ailments perceived in city dwellers, namely neurasthenia. Olmsted furthered his professional career by also designing the grounds for the Buffalo Insane Asylum. Though Alphand and Olmsted seemingly responded to different needs for their city dwellers, their basic goal was to address internal ailments of city dwellers.

The influence between France and the United States flows in the opposite direction later in the narrative of urban park development. Just like Olmsted travelled to France to gain insight into landscape architecture, André travelled to the United States to learn about techniques American landscape architects utilized. Olmsted developed these techniques through his own personal and professional experience designing grounds for schools. He realized that to enhance a student's ability to pursue education, he needed to make grounds that allowed for easy movement. This offered an easily maneuverable educational campus, which allowed students to get to class easily. It also incorporated the additional benefit of the grounds serving as places of healthful reactional activities. Olmsted transferred his methods for educational grounds' designs into his city parks. He began to create landscapes with liberal spacial features, allowing for accessibility while also forming a new park aesthetic based on this spaciousness. His value of accessibility extended to his consideration on park placement. He wrote on the importance of placing a park in a location of convenience at intersections of streets. Regarding these spacial features in U.S. parks, André developed his own aesthetic style of *très irregulier* which acted as a successor style to the

*irregulier style* Alphand often employed. *Très irregulier* incorporated Olmsted's style of open spaciousness but also a highly naturalized aesthetic which can be seen in the shredded borders of lakes in these parks. André also incorporated modes of accessibility from Olmsted's designs, specifically in walkways and bridges, allowing for easy movement for park visitors. Olmsted and André both further the development of landscape architecture by incorporating values of pragmaticism through accessibility and the coinciding pragmatic aestheticism that happened as a result of that accessibility.

Moving from influence towards cooperation, representatives of both the United States and France constructed the greenspaces included in the American Columbian Exposition. Olmsted again traveled to France to seek advice from André on the ornamentation of the grounds of Jackson Park. André provided him with specific ornamentation ideas, such as utilizing palms or lining the sidewalks with parapets filed with plants. André then sent the French horticulturalist, Maurice de Vilmorin, who oversaw landscape designs of André. Vilmorin also designed the horticulture exposition, save for the viticulture exhibit. Of this, Vilmorin wrote the report *Exposition Universelle de Chicago en 1893/ Comité 8 L'Horticulture Française À Chicago* which outlines his contributions and thoughts on the exposition. In his report, Vilmorin suggested for continued French and American cooperation in horticulture as he believed it would aid the growth of the discipline in both countries. In this show of international cooperation, Olmsted appeared to be securing the longevity of landscape architecture in the United States. By attempting to teach his successors, his son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Phillip Codman, he ensured the continuation of landscape architects. Apart from his using the Columbian Exposition as a teaching opportunity Olmsted demonstrated landscape architecture as an international discipline, which gave it some perceived credibility. He also clarified the job of a landscape architect as more than a designer of grounds and grounds alone, but as an atmosphere-builder, acting reactively to building architecture and the surrounding city.

Intellectually, Olmsted developed landscape architecture in the United States in tandem with Alphand and André in France by writing down their thoughts and designs. In making their knowledge a collective knowledge, they raised landscape architecture to the status of a developing craft worthy of an underlying philosophy. The philosophies are shown to value underlying political tones, aesthetics, and longevity. Below these surface-level values, all three landscape architects reveal a need to satisfy their park goers. Olmsted most fervently clarified his priority of helping

urban dwellers and the working class. Though, he could only perceive their needs without knowing their thoughts. Instead, he looked to Alphand in France, observed imperialistic tones, and blindly implemented them into the design of Central Park and Prospect Park. In building parks for agricultural colleges, he supported the working class obtaining a liberal arts education, while not supporting class mobility. Finally, by training his sons to go into landscape architecture, he created a heredity link between his family line and the discipline. In steps, Olmsted developed landscape architecture in the United States through his connection with France while simultaneously intellectualizing the discipline and furthering it from any understanding of the working class: the people he sought to aid.

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