Nonsense, caring and everyday hope: rethinking the value of playwork

At the time of writing, the UK is facing the deepest cuts to public services in the history of the welfare state (Slay, 2012). Publicly funded play services are at the forefront of these cuts (CRAE, 2015; Hayes, 2014). Playworkers are seeking different delivery models and ways of articulating value without compromising the playwork ethos. This highlights a fundamental tension for playwork between (in Marxist terms) its exchange value and use value. Put starkly, exchange value links directly to sources of funding for playwork projects and therefore lies in playwork's capacity to address social policy agendas such as play-based learning, development of social skills, crime reduction, physical activity/obesity reduction and community cohesion. Playwork's use value has been articulated in a number of ways, but broadly lies in the co-production of spaces that support children's open-ended and autotelic playing. Any attempt to direct playing towards policy outcomes risks commodifying it and turning it into something other than play. Yet these are not straightforward dualistic oppositions, nor are they the only way of articulating value.

This chapter draws on my research on the dialectics of playwork (Russell, 2013), which focused on open access playwork[1] that tends to be funded in deprived areas, a salient point. It offers a specific dialectical perspective, moving beyond stark either/or dualisms, grand narratives and causal statements, towards an appreciation of the interrelatedness of forms of value and the importance of keeping space open for whatever might emerge. This involves being comfortable with uncertainty and paying attention to ways that spaces are co-produced, in particular to small moments of playfulness, nonsense and perhaps resistance to adult intentions. What is offered here are but tentative steps. I am not pronouncing on a universally applicable strategy for the survival of playwork, but aiming to look beyond existing articulations of playwork's value, not to dismiss them as wrong, but to see what more can be said.

In the UK, playworkers have a set of principles that "establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork" (PPSG, 2005). These are informed by playwork theorizing that emanates mostly from those who were practicing playworkers on adventure playgrounds in the 1960s and 1970s. Given this, it is worth a quick glance at the founding ethos of adventure playgrounds.

In a filmed interview (COI, c1970), landscape architect Lady Marjorie Allen describes her discovery of a *waste material* playground in Copenhagen, Denmark, and how she brought the idea to the UK in the aftermath of World War II. The key arguments from this "propagandist for children's play", as the narrator calls her, are that:

- The environments we expect children to thrive in are barren ("we give them a pretty raw deal"); traditional playgrounds are boring and "not good enough".
- Adventure playgrounds are rough and ready affairs built "entirely by the children themselves" under the permissive supervision of a "playleader", where children were free to build, light fires, meet friends and to a large extent do as they want.
- One aspect Allen highlights is risk, saying "they can take really dangerous risks and overcome them".

Much has happened since those early days of adventure playgrounds. They have evolved, affected by regulations, funding initiatives and gradual shifts in understandings about childhood and play. Despite the ethos of adventure playgrounds being about children's ability to express their own play desires, this permissiveness was seen as a way of meeting social ends. Out of anarchy and freedom would come an understanding of democracy and citizenship. In this sense, adventure playgrounds were sites for education and hope for the moral reconstruction of post war Britain (Kozlovsky, 2008).

Key changes in UK legislation that fundamentally affected adventure playgrounds include the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which restricted defining features such as self-built play structures and fires, and the Children Act 1989, which brought playgrounds into the registration and inspection regime and therefore the ethos of early years services. In addition, the rise of neoliberalism and New Public Management ideology that ushered in technical, universal systems for measuring quality, accountability and effectiveness have had a significant impact on the way playworkers articulate value. This is particularly so in funding, tendering and monitoring documents, which privilege measurable and rational outcomes over play's frivolity and nonsense.

The Dialectics of Playwork (Or "How to Make Vinaigrette")

In their work playworkers navigate a number of contradictions that stem from adult rationalizations of the nature and value of childhood and of play. Open access playwork can only realistically survive through public funding, which is attached to social policy agendas. Put crudely, policymakers want open access play projects to normalize children deemed to be at risk of poor outcomes. It is understandable that the UK playwork sector seeks to show evidence of its value in policy terms. To this end, the Children's Play Policy Forum commissioned Tim Gill (2014) to write *The Play Return,*

which shows evidence of how investing in play provision can reap rewards in terms of children's development, community cohesion, reducing antisocial behavior, reducing obesity, reducing inequalities and helping to create healthier places.

In stark contrast, the playwork sector espouses notions of play's freedoms and autotelicity (that it should be for its own sake rather than attached to specific end goals and outcomes), with developmental and evolutionary benefits accruing from engagement in the widest possible range of play forms untainted by *adulteration* (the imposition of adult desires, intentions and anxieties onto children's play) (Hughes, 2012).

In practice, romantic ideals of fun, "natural" childhoods, innocence and hope for the future, evident in both policy and playwork discourse, rub up against the harsh reality of urban poverty and violence in playwork spaces that can be seen both as safe refuges from chaotic homes and dangerous streets and as volatile places of unpredictability. This is an aspect of playwork in inner city areas that has been poorly addressed in the contemporary literature but emerged as a major theme in my research.

These two expressions of value seem diametrically opposed. The metaphor that comes to mind for this contradiction is of vinaigrette: the oil of one way of articulating value does not readily mix with the vinegar of the other unless vigorously shaken – and then only temporarily. This is where the idea of dialectics comes in. Dialectics is a method, an approach to analysis. In my research I ended up drawing a lot on the work of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre never talks about dualisms (unless to critique them). For him, there is always a third, and this extends to his version of dialectics. Lefebvre drew on three philosophical influences for this: the work of Hegel, whose philosophy was about ideas; Marx, who looked at social practice; and Nietzsche, who made a plea for not only looking for rational ways to understand the world, but also considered the role of poesy, the irrational and, of course, play (Schmid, 2009).

Currently, the immiscible vinaigrette might look something like this:

Policy paradigms
- Childhood is preparation for adulthood (Wyness, 2006; Moss, 2007).
- Children are economic investments (see, for example, DfE, 2010; Allen, 2011).
- Policies require technical, universal and measurable interventions that lead to desired outcomes (Moss, 2007; Lester and Russell, 2013).
- Play becomes a tool for realizing policy aims (Lester and Russell, 2013).

Playwork paradigms

- Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity (PPSG, 2005).

- It is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated (PPSG, 2005).

- There is chronic pollution of children's ludic habitat (Sturrock et al., 2004; Patte and Brown, 2011).

- This leads to play bias and play deprivation (Hughes, 2012; Brown, 2013).

- Playwork acts as compensation for play deprivation and bias (Patte and Brown, 2011; Hughes, 2012).

- For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas (PPSG, 2005).

I think there is something missing here. Not only do these two perspectives not talk very well to each other, neither of them captures play's irrationality, vitality and frivolity - in other words, its nonsense; nor do they capture how play offers the feeling that life is worth living, at least for the moment of playing (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Both perspectives offer rational, instrumental and future-focused arguments for the value of play and therefore playwork. Dialectics as method may be a form of shaking the vinaigrette, disturbing the way we understand things at the moment, both in terms of policy and playwork paradigms. Shaking up our ideas from time to time must be a good thing, but maybe not sufficient if the oil and vinegar just return to their separate states soon afterwards.

Perhaps another way to keep the oil and vinegar of use and exchange value from separating is to add a third ingredient. An emulsifier, maybe, like mustard. What might playwork's mustard be? Perhaps we can look to Lefebvre's dialectical third, a Nietzschean and playful way of thinking about play. Maybe we have been taking play too seriously, making well-intentioned but perhaps rather overzealous claims for playwork's value as a result. What if an under-considered form of value might be found in play's very nonsense? This was one of the conclusions I came to in my research.[2]

A Spatial Perspective on Play and Playwork

I ended up looking somewhere other than the psychological theories our great playwork writers have used. I went to theories of space, and specifically to Henri Lefebvre[3]. Lefebvre had little to say about children, but his analysis of the politics of space has much to offer. For Lefebvre, space is not a neutral container for stuff, but is constantly in the process of being *produced* by the interrelationships between physical and social elements and the actions of individuals and institutions. These interrelationships are political because they are representations of power. Cities

are designed to support the processes of capital: production, distribution, exchange and consumption. Land and property are given an exchange value that places the institutions of power at the center with a collection of hierarchically organized and separate spaces for different purposes and different groups of people (Shields, 1999), with poorer people trapped in areas of the city where land value is lowest. Lefebvre describes this as the violence of the state against the individual, and suggests that cities have become

> A collection of ghettoes where individuals are at once "socialised", integrated, submitted to artificial pressures and constraints … and separated, isolated, disintegrated. A contradiction which is translated into anguish, frustration and revolt (Lefebvre, 1972, cited in Shields, 1999, p. 178).

Lefebvre wrote this in the 1970s, since which time cities have continued to grow, and land has continued to be at a premium (particularly in the tiny over-populated island of Britain); we can see this in the processes of regeneration and the current crisis over both housing and city centers. As the Marxist geographer David Harvey (2012) shows, it is always the poor who lose out in this process.

These state actions can be understood as a form of structural violence. Less obvious are the spatial practices that accompany them. There are expected ways for people to behave in specific places; in this sense spaces are disciplined and the relational elements of space are relations of power "coded by dominant embodied conceptions of 'race', sex, gender, and so on" (Tyner, 2012, p.20). To this we can add Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) idea of symbolic violence that occurs through the everyday acts of domination enacted in order to maintain status. Many of these may seem innocuous, and so much a part of everyday life as to seem *normal*.

Many theories of interpersonal violence focus on whether causes can be found in individual traits or environmental factors – the classic nature/culture binary. The sociologist Larry Ray (2011, p.5) offers this perspective that highlights the interrelationship of space, inequalities and violence:

> Violence is induced by shame, humiliation and cultures of masculine honour; the conditions for this are closely linked to socioeconomic inequalities …; violence is spatially distributed in ways that coincide with the spatial structuring of global capital.

This brings us back to the salience of open access playwork operating in areas of deprivation. As part of my research, I interviewed several playworkers, including those who were playworkers prior to 1990 and those who worked where I did my fieldwork. When asked about the home lives of children that use the playground, playworkers' responses were often emotional, for example, this response from playworker Tanith[4]:

It tends to be those with a lot of emotional shit [who] access play centres … it's amazing how many youngsters have got emotional shit going on in their lives.

Lefebvre's threefold dialectic of the production of space, introduced briefly here, offers a useful perspective on spatial politics, the pervasiveness of violence and the importance of play; applying this to playwork spaces also offers an understanding of the dialectics between the intrinsic and instrumental value of play (and, via a problematic extension, between use and exchange value of playwork).

Spatial practice, also termed "perceived space", refers to the everyday routines of life as experienced through the senses. Much of this is about the humdrum of daily struggles, and can be a site of alienation, a sense of disconnect between daily life and the meaning of life. This is where policy's instrumental understanding of play is most keenly felt and where play becomes a thing, a commodity with market value and understood as something to be "provided".

Representations of space, also called "conceived space", refers to the way that space is conceptualised through planning and maps. For playwork, this might be seen in the naming and zoning of the space (for example, the kickaround pitch, the natural play area or the kitchen) and of materials within the space (paintbrushes, unihoc sticks). This naming assumes that spaces and materials will be used in particular ways, producing desired outcomes – even though playworkers know that children will disturb these assumptions in their play. This is also where playwork theories reside, giving rise to a particular playwork discourse.

Spaces of representation: also termed "lived space", refers to moments of being fully present. It is the space of art, imagination and of course, play. This is when the daily grind is resisted, set aside for things that have meaning and make life worth living. A key aspect of lived space is that it defies the kinds of representations found in conceived and perceived space: it cannot be explained in the modernist, rational science of certainty, determinism and absolute truths, nor in the limits of language. Nor can it be planned, provided, measured or reduced to exchange value.

It should be stressed that these are not separate kinds of space, rather it is their ongoing entanglement that produces space.

This may all sound a bit abstract, so I'll illustrate it with a fairly lengthy, edited extract from my field notes. The Play Centre where I did my fieldwork has a tradition of celebrating Hallowe'en and the children are particularly ghoulish in their play. The October half term also coincided with both Eid and Diwali, and the Play Centre neighborhood has a large Muslim and a smaller Sikh community.

Tuesday 24 October

Playworkers present: Verda, Carla, Tanith, Jem, Gareth

I spent almost all the morning inside. One table has all the materials to make a mummy, another has henna and associated resources. The mummy idea gave rise to so many different play episodes throughout the whole morning.

A mother comes in with two daughters and explains one has a chest infection so will need her inhaler (she can administer this herself) and to take her off the list for swimming tomorrow. Both Jem and Verda hear her say this. Later, Verda tells Carla…

Verda has moved to the mummy table and is starting to work on this with a group of 8-10 children. There are several bags of shredded paper. The idea is to stuff the clothes with the shredded paper. The children start this, and inevitably, one child decides to throw the shredded paper up in the air … Gareth comes in from outside and comments "It's going to be a messy day." Before long a paper fight has started, with Gareth and Carla joining in. I missed how it started, but it is short-lived, with quite a few children following Gareth outside when he leaves and some carrying on with Carla for a little while. Throughout this brief moment of mayhem, Verda and Tanith continue with the mummy quietly in the background. Pauline and Jess (11-13 years old) have stuffed shredded paper up their jumpers and are walking around showing their bumps. They come up to me and I say, "My. Have you suddenly got fat or are you having a baby?" They reply, "No, it's paper," and show me. Pauline and Caitlin are now stuffing shredded paper into Tyrone's clothes and he looks like a dummy. They dance off outside singing "Dingle, Dangle Scarecrow." They come back inside and suddenly there is a whole crowd singing the song with Carla. They must range in age from 6/7 up to 13 years old and they are spontaneously singing "Dingle, Dangle Scarecrow." Tyrone now stuffs paper down his back to give him a hunchback, as does Caitlin and they ask for sticks. Carla gives Tyrone a yellow plastic hockey stick, Caitlin gets a blue stump out of a cricket set. They go off hobbling. The mummy making continues…

Tanith has taken the mummy and is sewing the stuffed socks to the trousers to the jumper. She surveys the scene – all surfaces are covered with shredded paper – and she wonders if it is worth sweeping up at this stage. I say I will. It takes half an hour because a number of games ensue including pretending to sweep up staff and children, and a small paper fight starting again. Then Moby (5 and very small) decides to sweep up. The wide institutional broom is much bigger than he is, but he is determined. After a while he wants to sweep up outside so I give him the outdoor brush. I go outside to make sure this is OK, and I notice that the hosepipe is running from the toilet window into the (covered) sandpit. Pauline, Jess, Caitlin, Tyrone and a few others are in their bare feet, squirting each other with the hose. Later, children bring sodden clothes in and

Carla wrings them out as much as she can. Caitlin finds something else to wear from the clothing left behind on the clothes pegs.

Tanith is still sitting quietly with a group of girls on the floor sewing up the mummy. I admire the girls' mendhi – it is Eid and they are all henna'd up. She has been sitting with them for quite a while and there is a gentle conversation going on about families and places they have visited. They need to turn the mummy over and sew up the back, so they lift it on to the table and Tanith continues there. The girls are making the head and Verda has helped others make the hands using gloves. It has taken most of the morning to get to this point, with a core of children sticking with the project itself and the others dipping in and out and using the resources to spark off other ways of playing. Now they start to wrap the mummy in bandages. There are a couple of enormous reels of white fabric (from the local scrapstore) about 15cms wide that look just like bandages. This new material sparks attention from Caitlin, Jess, Pauline and Tyrone. They start to wrap each other in the bandages and act as mummies. There are a lot of mummy jokes flying around at this stage too. I end up getting involved in wrapping the children in the bandages to make them mummies. With Tyrone, I stand still, holding the bandages taught while he spins round and round and makes himself dizzy. They then use red felt tip pens to give themselves bloody head-wounds. Sometime later I look again at the main mummy and see a group of girls painting henna patterns onto the mummy's bandaged hands.

As we are clearing up, Gareth tells everyone that Jenny from the nursery next door had told him she had seen Leo and Max throwing clay and stones at the little ones. She had gone to ask them to stop and they had run off down the road. She had seen them throwing clay and stones at the tram. One of the difficulties is that Max's mum will not be too bothered by this. Tanith says she knows Max's aunt and she could talk to her and she would then talk to Max's mum and be listened to.

The point about Lefebvre's triad is not that these are separate kinds of space but they combine to produce spaces that have a history, that are reflections of fluid power relations, that are constantly in the process of being produced, and that acknowledge the place of emotions. So, the kinds of planning that take place in conceived space are necessary *and* there needs to be awareness that space can still be left open for moments of nonsense in lived space. The series of playful moments of paper fights, scarecrows, singing, banter, hunchbacks and mummies would not have taken place in the manner described here without the main *activity* being loosely planned and without the culture of the center being as it was, open to whatever might emerge. It is an excellent example of the dialectical and entangled co-existence of moments in conceived, perceived and lived space. It shows how the space is open enough to allow for these different moments and play forms to erupt and die away. Alongside these moments are hundreds of others that combine to co-produce the conditions

in which playfulness thrives. Some of this may have been predictable, but largely, the approach is one of creating a situation and then feeling comfortable in just seeing what arises from it.

There is much else besides the playfulness and openness of the space. Much of playwork theorizing has, quite rightly, focused on play, as it is this that makes playwork unique. No other sector within the children's workforce has such potential for working with children on their terms. Yet much of what happens in playwork settings is not play, and these moments are also important in the co-production of a space that supports playfulness. This is illustrated in the extract through the interweaving of mundane bureaucratic matters, quiet chats about this and that, community relations, dealing with anti-social behavior, etc. These elements are all part of the day-to-day work and they can happen in the way they do because of the history of relationships and expectations. The playworkers can have the more didactic conversations with children at times about "kicking off" because they have shared these moments of playfulness. Playwork spaces can also provide a non-stigmatized space for families one step removed from official services such as Social Services or Youth Offending Teams, and I saw plenty of examples of sensitive navigating of those relationships. For example, some playworkers feed children because they know they need it. Another dialectic here is that these services, essential as they are for families, can happen in the way they do precisely because the space is open enough to be responsive in this way. Formalizing them risks closing down that openness.

Hope as an Expression of Value

This rather over-simplified introduction to Lefebvre's triple dialectics of space provides a grounding for understanding the contradictory emotions that emerged as a theme in my research. Playwork spaces are highly emotionally charged, and it is this aspect to which I now turn, focusing on one emotion that is at the core of adult-child relations, that of hope.

Hope is a defining feature of being human; it helps us stay optimistic if we can imagine what a better life might look like (Lester and Russell, 2013). Children are a repository for our hope for a better life (Kraftl, 2008) and this can be seen in those who work with children, including playworkers. In this sense, hope is closely linked to value. Drawing on work by children's geographer Peter Kraftl (2008), I identified three forms of hope-as-value, another dialectical triad.

Policy paradigms and utopian projects: Social policies relating to children and young people express hope both for and in children. These are manifest in a highly interventionist and technical approach to children and families policies, investing childhood with "a version of hopefulness based on maintaining competitiveness in global markets, couching this both in the moral language of equality

and the pragmatic language of economy" (Lester and Russell, 2013, p.41). This future focus, firmly ensconced in Lefebvre's conceived space, territorializes children, rendering childhood a site for adult colonization (Lester and Russell, 2013).

Marxist geographer Cindi Katz (2008, 2011) suggests an understanding of childhood that became pertinent to my political analysis, that of childhood as spectacle. The concept of spectacle is borrowed from French Situationist Guy Debord, who argued that direct experience in the modern world had been reduced to mere representation. Childhood has become a commodified image of real experience, a spectacle. Katz describes the growing sense of insecurity about the future that manifests across three domains: political, geopolitical and environmental. Children become a repository for these anxieties, which play out across three configurations.

Her first configuration is the "child as accumulation strategy", where children become a site of economic, psychic and emotional investment. The quest for perfect childhoods can be seen in practices such as hothousing, competition for entry to the best schools and universities, extra tuition, hypervigilance and myriad parenting guides. Adults invest time, emotion and money into making their children's childhoods the best they can be, equipping them for the future, keeping them as safe as possible through a range of controls and constraints.

The "child as ornament", Katz's second configuration, is the child as bauble and fashion accessory, the doll to be clothed in apparel from a burgeoning children's fashion industry (with its own politics of production). In addition, the ornament is a form of essentializing of childhood innocence so that anxieties over the loss of childhood innocence can be invoked to fuel the desire for vigilance and control.

The third configuration of the "child as waste" has particular relevance here. The fear of a wasted youth feeds the niche marketing that underpins the first two configurations. Those children and families who do not conform to or cannot achieve the normative ideal fulfil this function. Many of the children at the Play Centre fitted into this configuration, and were subject to myriad "waste management" policy interventions through the welfare, education, health and justice systems, and even, perhaps, through playwork itself. Early adventure playgrounds were welcomed by the authorities as a way of keeping delinquent boys off the streets. In my research, the Play Centre received funding from the Children's Fund, aimed directly at working with children deemed at risk of poor outcomes.

Revolutionary hope: Alongside this future-focused, colonized space of hope runs another, historically based ethos underpinning the playwork sector. In the late 1960s and 1970s, when my "past"

interviewees were practicing playworkers, many playworkers were attracted to the work because of its anarchic and democratic nature. Civil liberties underpinned the *zeitgeist*, and many playworkers' favorite books included the anarchist Colin Ward, and children's liberationists such as John Holt, A.S. Neill and Leila Berg. The interviews I did, and the literature of the time, expressed broad optimism in children's futures being *politically* rather than *individually* better through supporting the development of a form of class consciousness.

> Adventure playgrounds were gonna save the world! … By offering children a different life experience, yeah. By … giving them a real place, and a recognised place, and power … [it] was very much about the importance of those sort of children with that sort of position in society having a better deal ... That was the idea, we can do it for ourselves, we don't need top-down bloody government, you know, we can control our own lives (Carol interview).

Although this macro level political revolutionary hope is less evident today, vestiges of this anti-establishment recalcitrance remain, mainly in terms of the openness to what social theorist Nikolas Rose calls "minor politics" – small everyday negotiations of power (both in terms of caring and resistance) that might be seen as a form of activism (Horton and Kraftl, 2009). Playwork settings are well placed to support this. In terms of the Play Centre, what was noticeable was how the playworkers *cared* about what some might see as "petty" details of the children's relationships, power struggles and fallings out. They may well be amongst the few adults in children's lives to have this caring response to the exuberances and tragedies of playing.

Moments of nonsense as "near hope": The third form of hope reflects what Kraftl (2008) terms "childhood-hope". Here we shift our gaze from the dominant conceived and perceived space to an acknowledgement of the importance of moments in lived space. This is to do with alternative understandings of play and an appreciation of children's desire to appropriate time and space for just being and just playing. Rather than play's benefits being deferred until adulthood, they might be understood through play's capacity to enliven everyday life as it is in the here and now (and of course this will affect the future too).

In my research, it was evident that the playworkers got this, and in informal conversations, they gleefully related stories of moments of pure nonsense.

> If I can chase a kid and he's happy and he's coming up to me and giving me a brilliant play cue, you know, and he's laughing at me calling me big nose or whatever and running off and giggling, say a little six-year-old, you've done something for that child, you've made them happy, even for a split second (Jem interview).

So What Does It All Mean?

The Playwork Principles imply precedence of use value over exchange value. On a purely pragmatic level, unless use value predominates in children's everyday experiences in open access playwork settings, they will stop coming. So, although the funding that paid for staff at the Play Centre at the time of the research was grounded in policies aimed at crime reduction, it also afforded moments of playful nonsense in lived space. The dialectic is that our official articulations about playwork, including the Playwork Principles, reside in Lefebvre's conceived and perceived space, and necessarily so, because lived space defies representation and cannot be planned in any precise way. The dialectic has to remain.

What the extract from my field notes highlights is the importance of small moments in lived space, of caring and openness, of being comfortable with uncertainty, alongside (and often in a dialectical relationship with) the bigger instrumental and universal assertions of the value of play and playwork. Playwork's instrumental value can be articulated in terms of its ability to offer the children the conditions for playful experiences they would not have elsewhere, and all the benefits this has for children both in the here and now and in the future. It can also be articulated in terms of addressing social policy agendas such as anti-social behaviour, skills development, physical activity and so on. Yet, these instrumental outcomes can only be ethically claimed if understood as a part of the overall assemblage that is a playwork setting: the combination of, for example, relationships, material and symbolic objects, space, histories, playfulness and caring that constitutes what is unique about the work. This has implications for how playwork's uniqueness is articulated, both within and outside the playwork community. At the moment, we seek to show just how serious play is, when perhaps we should also be extolling its non-seriousness - in a dialectical relationship of course.

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[1] The term 'open access' is used in the UK to differentiate out of school childcare and settings where children are in principle free to come and go and there is no contractual agreement with caregivers. My research looked mostly at adventure playgrounds and play centres.

[2] For a more detailed exploration of this understanding of play see the chapter in this volume by Stuart Lester

[3] For a more detailed analysis of my application of Lefebvre's ideas about space to play and playwork, see Wendy Russell. "'I get such a feeling out of … those moments': Playwork, passion, politics and space." *International Journal of Play*,Vol.1.1 (2012): 51-63.

[4] All names of playworkers and children have been changed