



Houghton, Joseph (2020) *Freedom to play: will adults ever really let go.* [MEd].

Copyright © 2020 The Author

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author(s)

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author(s)

The content must not be shared, changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, institution and date must be given

<http://dissertations.gla.ac.uk/529/>

Deposited: 23 May 2022

Enlighten Dissertations  
<http://endeavour.gla.ac.uk/>  
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk



**Matriculation Number:**

**Course Title:** M.Ed. in Childhood Practice

**Supervisor's Name:** Craig Orr

**Assignment Title:** Freedom to Play: Will Adults Ever  
Really Let Go

**Date of Submission:** 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Word Count:** 14,989

**Submitted for M.Ed. in Childhood Practice**

**School of Education**

**University of Glasgow**

**November 2020**

## **Abstract**

Modern global, national, political and societal concern for the child have propelled all aspects of children's lives to the fore. This is reflected in the world's emergent biopower where the biological life of citizens has become increasingly politicised and effectively taken into ownership of the state (Rainbow and Rose, 2006: 200). Given this rising dominance of biopower for steering people's lives, play is increasingly embraced for its purposeful utility as an instrument of state focussed not only on the child but also driving national agendas. Competing to be recognised, against these significant biopolitical forces of power, is a more intangible, undefinable and elusive understanding of play which has no other purpose than the autotelic end itself.

## Contents

<b>Title Page</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>List of abbreviations and acronyms</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction and Rationale</b> .....	<b>8</b>
1.1 Overview.....	8
1.2 Research Rationale.....	10
<b>Chapter 2: Policy Context</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 Establishing the Policy Context.....	13
2.3 The Micro Picture.....	14
2.4 Biopolitical Power and the Universal Utopia.....	15
2.5 The Perils of Childhood.....	17
2.6 Policy Context for Out of School Care in Scotland.....	19
2.7 Biopolitical Dominance.....	21
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology and Theoretical Method</b> .....	<b>22</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	22
3.2 Positivism.....	22
3.3 Interpretivism.....	23
3.4 Positioning my Research.....	24
3.5 Formulating the Narrative Approach.....	25
3.6 Towards a Theoretical Model.....	26
3.6.1 'New Social Studies of Childhood' Versus	
'New Wave' Post-Dualism.....	28
3.6.2 Towards a 'New Wave' Conceptual Positioning.....	29
3.7 De/Re-finishing the Method.....	30
<b>Chapter 4: Focus 1</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Play in a Biopolitical World: Can the 'Autotelic' Flame be Fanned?...</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	34

4.2 The Messiness of Play.....	34
4.2.1 Embracing the Messy Matter of Play.....	35
4.3 Fracturing the Romantic Idyl.....	37
4.3.1 A Contemporary Rural and Urban Perspective Through a Vista of Blake, Bruegel, and the Oppies.....	38
4.3.2 Cleansing Play and the Reality of Practice.....	41
4.4 'Tidbits' of Uncontested Truths and the Unstable Premise of Biopolitical Interventions.....	43
4.4.1 Taking from Huizinga and Others.....	43
4.4.2 Questioning the 'tidbits'.....	45
<b>Chapter 5: Focus 2 .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Play in Scotland: Can the Politics of Progression     Change the Narrative?.....</b>	<b>47</b>
5.1 Matching the Strategic Vision to the Global Context.....	47
5.1.1 Who's Agenda?.....	49
5.2 Concluding Thoughts.....	50
<b>Chapter 6: Summary Conclusion.....</b>	<b>52</b>
6.1 Purpose Beyond the Research.....	52
6.2 Overview of Findings.....	53
6.2.1 The Method as a Navigational Tool.....	55
6.3 Ethics, Covid-19 and Limitations.....	55
6.4 Implications Beyond and for Future Research.....	57
<b>Reference List.....</b>	<b>58</b>

## Acknowledgements

This thesis has been written at a challenging time and I would particularly like to thank my wife, Zoë and two sons, Ben and Charlie for all their support over the last six months. As unwitting sound boards, they have endured without complaint, my daily ramblings on play as I have increasingly vocalised my emerging thoughts and ideas to make sense of it all. I am also extremely grateful for their understanding of the necessary time commitments required for me to undertake this research.

I would also like to thank the wonderful staff from the two Out of School Care settings, who agreed (prior to the Covid-19 lockdown) to participate in my intended focus group discussion. I would especially like to thank them for their help and support in holding everything together to enable me to complete my thesis.

A huge thanks also to Mary Wingrave and all the 'Childhood Practice' tutors at the University of Glasgow who have steered me through a very enjoyable Post Graduate Masters programme over the last 3 years with such inspiration, knowledge and fun.

Finally, I would like to make a special thanks to my supervisor, Craig Orr, for pulling me out of the occasional 'rabbit hole' and for his direction, patience and support over the last 12 months.

## List of Figures

Fig. 1.1 -	Rates of return to human capital investment in disadvantaged children (Heckman and Masterov, 2007: 476) .....	<b>16</b>
Fig 3.1	A dimensional assembly of four multiplicities .....	<b>33</b>

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.

BERA	British Educational Research Association guidelines
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
CRC	The Committee on the Rights of the Child
CYPCS	Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECM	Every Child Matters
EYF	Early Years Framework
HSCS	The Health and Social Care Standards
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
MORI	Market and Opinion Research International
NSSC	New Social Study of Childhood
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSC	Out of School Care
PPSG	The Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group
SLF	Scottish Learning Festival
SOSCN	Scottish Out of School Network
UNCRC	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WeALL	Wellbeing Economic Alliance



## **Chapter 1 - Introduction and Rationale**

### **1.1 Overview**

This research paper seeks to bring into question the structural pervasiveness and dominance of the instrumental and persuasive view of play as a means-to-an-end, often associated with the largely normative ‘rhetoric of play as progress’ (Sutton-Smith, 1997: 9). Radiating from macro to micro, through the worlds of bio-politics, education, early childhood education and care (ECEC), culture, academic discourse, play and playwork advocacy, this rhetoric extols a politicized embodiment of play as a force for good, invariably prioritising the child to a future-orientated and socially constructed childhood. While this paper is not seeking to question the important and critical role of play for a child’s development, education, health, learning, cognitive functioning, wellbeing and many other developmental facets of life, it will, however, consider the assertion that some of these common assumptions of play and its oft-credited role in children’s lives can be ‘misleading’ or even ‘suspect’ at times (Burghardt, 2005: 381).

On the other side of the ‘play coin’, this paper will also examine the less tangible possibilities of play as an intrinsic flow experience, the goal (Greek: ‘telos’) being [it]self (Greek ‘auto’) - ‘autotelic’ – and thus, self-contained, takes place only for its own sake, as an end in itself and without reference to any future benefit (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008: 67). Invariably, play’s intrinsic autotelic flame is smothered or even extinguished by what Lester and Russell (2008: 9) refer to as the ‘dominant paradigm’ of adult-moulding instrumentality. Playwork’s own guiding light, the Play Principles, reflect these quasi-dichotomic tensions through a juxtaposition of play’s intrinsic ludic idealism as a ‘freely chosen’ end-in-itself on the one hand (PPSG, 2005: Playwork Principle no. 2) and the more instrumentally progressive episteme as a future-bearing force for good on the other (PPSG, 2005: Playwork Principle no. 1).

In the latter half of the twentieth century the interconnectedness of modern global society propelled the multi-faceted lives of children to the fore with contemporary theorisations of childhood paralleled by developments within the modern children's rights movement (Freeman, 1998: 433). The United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child, 1989 (UNCRC) (UNICEF, Online) reflected this growing interest and concern for the child and a desire to capture a universal language and perspective of what childhood should be. This precipitated an elevation of the child's participatory voice (Tisdall and Punch, 2012: 249), which corresponded with a new sociological propulsion of the child's political and agentic status. Emerging to counter the dominance of socialisation and developmental science with its passive positioning of the child (Moran-Ellis, 2010: 188), these developments in the fields of sociology, anthropology, history and children's geographies, became known as the 'new social study of childhood' (NSSC) resulting in claims of a new emergent paradigm (James and Prout, 1997: 3). From within the NSSC, a socially constructed childhood emerged which was and remains dominated by a range of dualistic dichotomic status-enhancing (and status-reducing) tensions such as active-passive (Leonard, 2016: 12), visible-invisible (Oldman, 1994: 43), nature-culture (Ryan, 2011: 439) and being-becoming (Qvortrup, 1994: 4).

Playwork's own contradictory tensions would, at least on the surface, appear to be caught up in the bio-social, dualistic tensions that dominate this emergent space. On the one hand, the intrinsic ludic 'purist' view of play, seen by Brown (2009: 5) as the 'purest expression' of humankind and the 'essence of freedom' existing for its own reward (Ibid., 18.) energises the political agency of the child. On the other hand, the prescient dominance of the goal-driven instrumental view of play with its extensive range of developmental claims, has supported its understandable socio-political attractiveness and utility as a tool for socio-developmental processes, outcome-based approaches and adult-driven agendas. In this thesis I hope to locate a conceptual space that can accommodate both these dialectic positions in a way that enables me to energise or indeed re-ignite the autotelic flame that would appear to struggle in the face of such a hurricane

of instrumentality. This dialectic in its basic form reduces play to a tautology of freedom and purpose (Cook: 2019: 129) which naturally resonates with the dualistically conceived NSSC. As Moran-Ellis suggests, there is a need to:

..reconcile questions of agency and 'being' (Qvortrup, 1994) with questions of growth, change and the processes (of socialisation, development and physical growth) ...by which one becomes a member of a community and/or culture.

(Moran-Ellis, 2010: 197)

## 1.2 Research Rationale

Much of the literature and research surrounding play tends to coalesce around a number of well-trodden paths and common themes, often presented through distinctive persuasive ideological rhetorics of play (Sutton-Smith, 1997: 8). Firstly, these rhetorics often seek to clarify what play is, to emphasise its position as a fundamental children's right and, as already discussed, to espouse its significant value to children's health, development, wellbeing and learning (Horton and Kraftl, 2018: 215). Secondly, at a political level, such benefits are often utilised or even hijacked, to leverage play's status as a socio-political tool for driving national outcomes and resolving wider contemporary problems relating to issues such as youth crime, obesity and social cohesion (Russell, 2018: 44-45). The third common theme focuses on the increasingly limited opportunities for children to play in an ever-urbanised, risk averse society (Gill, 2007: 14; Voce, 2015: 5) which often points to an impending play-deficit crisis for children (Hughes, 2001: viii). Much of the existing research and literature relating to play, therefore in response, has an advocacy-like emancipatory-driven edge, particularly within playwork discourse. Socio-cultural factors that impact and limit children's play opportunities are of particular concern and tend to home-in on issues of increased urbanisation, traffic risk, paranoid parenting styles, risk aversion, media portrayal of children, as well as stranger danger, battery-raised children, helicopter parenting and

antisocial behaviour (Cole-Hamilton and Gill, 2002; Gill, 2007; Voce, 2015). Further concerns point to an increasing prevalence of 'socio-technological' and 'junk food' driven 'toxic' childhoods (Palmer, 2015: 16).

All three of the above foci bear relevance to this paper's rationale which is premised on observed differences in the way children play between two Out of School Care settings (OSC); one rural, the other urban. However, the common rhetorics and themes discussed above are diverse and wide-ranging, and while it will be necessary to reference some of these themes, it would be impossible to do them all justice within the scope of this thesis. Emerging from my rationale, however, is the question of why, in spite of a significant range of persuasive discourse associated with the intrinsic end-in-itself ideal of play (see Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 2013; Hakarrainen, 1999; Lester and Russell, 2008; Lester and Russell, 2010; Russell, 2013), does the notion of autotelic play appear to gain such little political traction and conceptual acceptance in the 'grown up' social and political space? Flowing from this are questions concerning how this is manifested within adult-child micro cultures, children's play environments, wider macro socio-political structures, policy initiatives, and ultimately in the opportunities and freedoms afforded children and their play?

The two OSC settings are just ten miles apart, share the same staff, but serve quite different demographic communities. One is more urbanised and geographically positioned as a Greater Glasgow satellite town with strong connections to densely populated conurbation of Scotland's central belt. In contrast, the rural setting is demographically more self-contained with a resulting geographical detachment and reduced social mobility. As co-founder, co-owner and manager along with my wife of both these Out of School Care (OSC) settings, my observations as a playworker practitioner over the last 8 years have drawn me to reflect on a discernible difference in the way children play between the two settings. The playwork ideal of play as 'freely chosen' (PPSG, 2005: Playwork Principle no. 2) dominates practice at both settings. In spite of the 'regulatory' requirements of accountability as a registered care service and inevitable adult-child dynamics of power and control (Russell, 2018: 51), the provision of play is

driven by a sense of mediating (government) policy through one's own value systems (Gold et al. 2003: 131). To this end a practice-based intent focuses on providing play experiences as close to the intrinsic ludic ideal of play for-its-own-sake as possible within such an instrumental means-to-an-end regulatory context. This autotelic focus of play underpins the observational premise for sensing what would appear to be these discernible differences in the way children play between the two settings and has provided the necessary 'spark' for this research paper. This paper sets out, therefore, to gain a better understanding of these localised phenomenon of play, to consider conditions that may have produced these differences and to seek solutions to any issues or problems (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007: 200).

The structure of this paper will firstly consider, in chapter two, the policy context relating to my research focus and rationale. Chapter three will discuss the opposing paradigmatic methodologies of positivism and interpretivism. From this I will assign an appropriate methodology and method that best aligns with my two narrative review focus chapters (four and five). My first narrative review focus (chapter four) asks whether autotelic play can gain traction in the world of biopolitics by considering three key themes; messiness as an essential function of play, the delimiting nature of an over-romanticised view of play, and the validity of some common assumptions of play. The second narrative review focus (chapter five) questions if the politically progressive narrative in Scotland can change regarding play by focusing specifically on the 'Play Strategy for Scotland' documentation (Scottish Government, 2013a; 2013b). Chapter six will offer a brief summary conclusion.

## **Chapter 2 - Policy Context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will outline and explore the policy context relating to the questions, rationale and overarching focus of my thesis. Relevant, is how macro global and national biopolitical agendas cascade down through the micro contexts of children's lives such as families, ECEC (including OSC), schools and communities, and ultimately, freedoms afforded children, both in their everyday lives and in relation to their play.

In contextualising this policy backdrop, I will briefly outline the two main questions and focus themes which will form the basis of my narrative review in chapters four and five.

### **2.2 Establishing the Policy Context**

The first narrative review focus (chapter four) will seek to conceptually foreground intrinsic autotelic play in favour of its more dominant dialectically opposed (and biopolitically-driven) instrumental companion (Russell, 2018: 44). Following Deleuze and Guatarri (2013), this will enable me to consider the complex, heterogenous, ambiguous and undefinable turn of play through features of 'multiplicity' and emergent 'assemblages' within the (also biopolitically-driven) policy context. My aim is to conceptually locate play (intrinsic and instrumental) outside the polarised binary subject-object logic, through decentred rhizomic 'determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions' (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2013: 7). Removing the 'problematic' bio-social dualistic premise associated with the NSSC (Lee and Motskau, 2011: 8) will enable novel ways for thinking about the heterogeneity of such intrinsic play within multiplicities that relate to the hybridity of social, material, political and spatial contexts (Horton and Kraftl, 2018: 214).

The second narrative review focus (chapter five) will extend these biopolitical arguments with a specific focus on the national policy context as it relates to promoting and driving the play agenda in Scotland. It will consider how Foucaultian biopolitics, through governance, policy and legislature (Foucault, 2009: 1), attempts to drive human and societal flourishing and politically frame understandings of play and constructs of contemporary childhood. To support this focus, my narrative review will therefore take a closer look at the 'Play Strategy for Scotland' (vision and action plan) (Scottish Government, 2013a; 2013b). This will enable me to map the biopolitical processes that flow from global macro utopian visions of play, to national macro interventions, through to play at the micro intersections of children's lives. Similar to the first focus in chapter four, this narrative focus will also seek 'a line of flight' beyond modern dualisms through a more conciliatory ('new wave') non-binary plane of thinking (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013: 6). The inclusion of the 'excluded middle' (Prout, 2011: 4), will enable the policy context, emergent as a function of biopolitical power, to be conceptualised along a unified plane of thought, through assembled multiplicities of *resource, space, time* and *agential enactment* (Barad, 2007; Horton and Kraftl, 2018; Lee and Motskau, 2011; Lester, 2015). The process of arriving at this method will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

### **2.3 The Micro Picture**

My rationale, based on discernible differences in the way that play is observationally perceived between the rural and urban OSC settings, would suggest a conflux of influence at the intersections of children's micro socio-cultural environments (homes, schools and communities). These micro geographies are not isolated bubbles, and wider macro global and national political forces play a significant role in shaping the attitudes, understandings, and culture within these micro-environments (Lee and Motskau, 2011: 9). This is especially pertinent to the micro cultural worlds of children's play. As Corsaro (2005: 18) suggests, children's play involves

active participation and creative internalization of the adult world, society and culture as part of wider social and political processes. Children's freedoms and active engagement in society therefore, by logical extension, will be correspondingly enhanced or constrained through these social cultures (Ibid., 19). An increasing culture of fear and risk aversion relating to children, for example, has the potential to structurally constrain children's freedoms. These fears are more likely to be magnified in urban geographies through factors such as excess traffic and more complex working lives impacting negatively on structures of social cohesion (Gill, 2007: 14). This suggests that in more rural communities, reduced population, traffic and social mobility, resulting in greater social cohesion and local intel, might conversely contribute to a more 'laissez-affaire' attitude to children's freedom with increased opportunities for adult-free play. These possibilities will be explored further in chapter four (4.3.1).

## **2.4 Biopolitics of Power and the Universal Utopia**

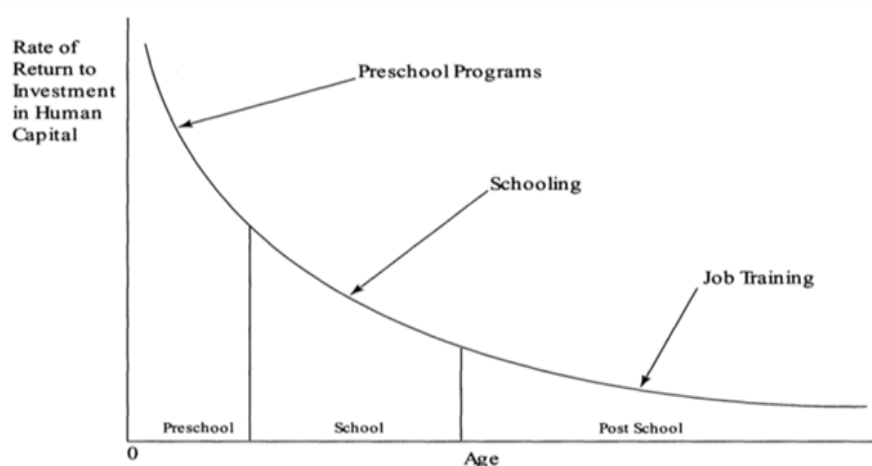
Michel Foucault's theory of biopolitics and biopower, developed in the late 1970's, concerns the art of governance (18<sup>th</sup> century onwards) through which 'the basic biological features of the human species became the object of political strategy, of a general strategy of power' (Foucault, 2009: 1). Larger global and political forces are especially potent in relation to children, forging ideological conceptions and universalistic agendas for the modern child (Lee and Motskau, 2011: 10). The 54 articles of the UNCRC's children's rights, for example, (UNICEF, Online), encompass a range of civic, economic, social and cultural (including play) ideological entitlements, seen as essential requirements of childhood (Tisdall and Punch, 2012: 250). These rights almost universally ratified by nation states across the world, require a future obligation on individual countries to make them a legal and political reality. However, there is criticism that the minority world universal bias tends to negate cultural realities and traditions for many children across the majority world (Hart, 2006: 7). Further critique points to their pervasive needs-based concern for the child reinforcing the dominant adult and



subordinate child stereotype effectively undermining the child's agential and political status. (Wyness, 2006: 33). In the devolved national context of Scotland, a continuation of these contradictory tensions is evident in the recent Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (2014) which Tisdall (2015: 769) believes highlights wellbeing concerns and needs-based approach at the expense of its effective statutory implementation.

Also, particularly relevant at the current time, are the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). Politically streamlined through Scotland's National Performance Framework (Scottish Government, Online, 2018), they mark out the ambitions for national policy for children up to 2030. These include levelling attainment, eliminating poverty, improving contributions to society through improved education and skills and a core focus on individual and national wellbeing. Furthermore, OECD 'Starting Strong' documentation from 2001 onwards (OECD, Online) has been highly relevant as a biopolitical force in relation to ECEC national policy in Scotland. This can be seen in the recent significant uplift in provision of free pre-school educational entitlement driven through the policy ambitions of the 'Blueprint for Scotland 2020' (Scottish Government, 2017b: 6-10). This early intervention approach has been a consistent theme of OECD publications, particularly in respect to economic and social productive payback as highlighted by Heckman and Masterov (2007: 476) in Fig. 1 below.

**Fig. 1.1 - Rates of return to human capital investment in disadvantaged children**



Play, within ECEC, including OSC, is also included in these ambitions. For example, in the 'Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision' (Scottish Government, 2013a) it is viewed as 'crucial to Scotland's wellbeing, socially, economically and environmentally'.

Scotland, therefore, would appear highly committed politically to this universal utopia of economic and social wellbeing. As an ambition this was clearly laid out by Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland, in her keynote address to the 'Wellbeing Economy Alliance' (WeALL) in January 2020 (Scottish Government, Online, 2020). In it she evidently envisages Scotland playing a key role in this global drive towards a new economic purpose, where 'a successful economy, a successful society and a successful country overall' are seen as key drivers of individual and national wellbeing. I will return to this important political backdrop in chapter five when I look in more detail at the strategic vision for play in Scotland.

## **2.5 The Perils of Childhood**

The UK's national psyche and preoccupation with the lives of children, politically and socially, has been significantly impacted through a number of high-profile incidents involving children. This has contributed to a sceptre of modern childhood viewed as both dangerous and in danger (Moran-Ellis, 2010: 189). The media, political and public furore following the high-profile case of Victoria Climbié, who died in 2000 at the hands of terrible abuse from her carers (Laming, 2003), is one such example. Further examples include the abduction and brutal murder of two year old Jamie Bulger in 1993 by two ten year old boys (UNICEF, 2001), and the abduction and murder of two ten year old girls by Ian Huntley in Soham in 2002 (Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Online, 2004). All these cases have significantly elevated social and political concern for children. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Soham murders, an Ipsos MORI poll (Ipsos MORI, 2002) indicated that 71 percent of parents were more fearful for their child's safety, 68 percent felt an overriding need to supervise their children at all times and

importantly 60 percent of parents said they were less likely to let their children out to play with friends.

In England, the political fall-out from the Victoria Climbié case, led to a more integrated children's workforce and gave rise to the policy framework 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) (DfES, 2004) with its five notable universal outcomes (Voce: 2015: 78):

1. Being Healthy
2. Staying Safe
3. Enjoying and Achieving
4. Making a Positive Contribution
5. Achieving Economic Wellbeing.

Strong safety as well as OECD and Children's rights drivers are evident here. Similar moves, in the recently devolved Scotland, gave rise to the 'Early Years Framework' (EYF) (Scottish Government, 2008a). Again, the safety-emphasis focussed on improving the life chances for children and families at risk by protecting from crime, disorder and danger, reducing inequality and improving economic outcomes for all (Ibid., 30). In addition, the four capacities from the flagship 'Curriculum for Excellence' (CfE) (Scottish Government, 2011a) were included, again mirroring the English ECM framework (DfES, 2004), with key targeted outcomes for children including:

1. Successful learners
2. Confident individuals
3. Effective contributors
4. Responsible citizens

Play, with its utilitarian value, has been granted elevated status in supporting these political ambitions, as a key tool for learning, socialisation, development, building social cohesion and promoting individual as well as national wellbeing. The Play Strategy for Scotland (2013a: 8) captures this by directly connecting play to the four CfE capacity outcomes (above)

(Scottish Government, 2011a) and by attributing it to the underpinning of the EYF (Scottish Government, 2008a), 'Equally Well' (Scottish Government, 2008b) and 'Achieving our Potential' (Scottish Government, 2008c).

## **2.6 Policy Context for Out of School Care in Scotland**

The powerful concern for children, in need of protection and requiring future-steering, as well as their desired role as productive citizens within a successful society, positions them as key instrumental drivers of political ambitions. This is especially evident in the recently introduced 'Health and Social Care Standards' (HSCS) (Scottish Government, 2017a), the regulatory framework through which OSC in Scotland is judged and assessed. In the standards, play is assigned a key role in driving these instrumental outcomes and future-seeking ends. The standards reflect a powerful needs-based approach which is underscored by the requirement of individualised care plans for all children regardless (Scottish Government, 2017a: 6-7) and by a need to protect from 'harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation' (Ibid., 11). A strong emphasis on achieving full potential (including education and employment) is underpinned by highlighting play's instrumental value for development of wide range of capabilities, including social and physical skills through 'organised and freely chosen extended play' and the promotion of 'confidence, self-esteem and creativity' (Ibid., 7).

Play's inherent contradictions emerge here. The 'freely chosen' mantra does not sit well with the juxtaposition of being simultaneously 'organised' (Ibid.). However, this juxtaposition also hints at a romantic authentically conceived child in a Reggio Emilia sense with Rousseauian notions of the child born as good and needing adult help to achieve their full potential (Rousseau, 1921: 5). It is therefore suggestive of Vygotskian principles of assisted 'proximal development', Erickson's focus on child's strengths through 'positivity' and the Piagetian (as opposed staged) image of an active, self-motivated child (Fraser, 2006: 23-30).

In addition, play's tautology of freedom and purpose (Cook, 2019: 129) is further evidenced in the HSCS:

..as a child, I can direct my own play and activities in a way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate by own curiosity, learning and creativity.

(Scottish Government, 2017a: 9)

This cited standard encapsulates many of the dichotomic tensions that tend to dominate the 'landscape of modern childhood' (Ryan, 2008: 572). It also exemplifies global and national biopolitical forces that flow through policy, which are themselves caught in the dualisms of modern thought (Prout, 2011: 6). From a NSSC perspective the standard affords political and agentic status to the child through freedoms which are then taken back through adult notions of appropriate staging. This represents a historical throwback to normative scientific developmental theories of Gesell (1925: 376-378) and the refined four-staged positionings of Piaget (2006: 100-106), which according to Ryan (2008: 561), tend to persist in institutional policy. The standard also implicitly reinforces the 'transient' as opposed 'permanent' status of the child (Wyness, 2006: 28) or as Pilcher (1995: 24) suggests, the 'separateness' of incompetent child from competent adult. Furthermore, socialisation, the final piece of the *political-authentic-socialisation-developmental* cartesian ordering of modern childhood (Ryan, 2008: 558) is also reflected in the HSCS. Here, correction, control and conditioning of the child takes the form of passive 'appropriation' (Corsaro, 8). In the HSCS, 'novice' status, linked to Locke's Tabula rasa 'clean' or 'wiped slate' (Duschinsky, R. 2012), seeks to promote the child's competency in daily routines, addressing behaviour, understanding consequences, and negotiating risk (Scottish Government, 2017a: 9). Here the 'untamed threat' of the child is steered towards competence and actively contributing to society (Parson and Bales, 1956: 36)

## 2.7 Biopolitical Dominance

A Foucaultian reading of biopolitics, according to Lee and Motskau (2011: 9), strategically places and involves the modern government state in the position of identifying, training, and fostering peoples' innate capabilities and behaviours. It would imply that the overarching question to this paper; 'freedom to play: can adults ever really let go?' is unavoidably bound to these dimensions of biopolitical power which emerge from governmental 'rationalities' as overlapping 'arts' of truth, economic agents, the state, and the governed (Foucault: 2008: 313). As is argued above, policy and political motivation, ambitions and agendas are inextricably linked to these biopolitical forces which ultimately impact on the micro-environments of children's lives. This includes the urban and rural communities of the two OSC settings which, in relation to my rationale in chapter one (1.2), would suggest contrasting absorption and osmosis of these biopolitical powers between the two communities. This would also suggest that many of the commonly flagged socially constraining cultural factors discussed in the introduction (paranoid parenting styles, risk aversion and stranger danger), which impact and limit children's opportunities and freedom to play, are perhaps more symptomatic of these powerful macro bio-political forces. In chapter five I will consider more closely the implications of these biopolitical powers on Scotland's strategic vision for play in its 'Play Strategy for Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2013a; 2013b).

However, the potent energy that emanates from this deep-rooted politicisation of childhood is marked by global and national ambitions which embody a dependent future-driven progressive for the child (Lee, 2001: 27). This backdrop inevitably positions children at the centre of the dualistic landscape of modern childhood (Ryan, 2008: 572). In the following chapter I will consider whether the dualistic battleground of the NSSC or the post-modern 'new wave' approach will provide the most suitable 'navigational aid' (Lee and Matsouku, 2011: 8) for addressing the questions and focus of my narrative review in chapters four and five.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology and Theoretical Method**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Sanders et al (2009: 107) consider research philosophy an all-encompassing term that is concerned with developing knowledge as well as developing an understanding of the nature of that knowledge. They note that no one research philosophy is better than another but is just better at doing different things (Ibid., 108-109). This is important as it underpins the fundamental purpose of research which is to enhance our understanding of the world (Hart, 2018: 3). A conflux of experience, making sense and researching it provides an interconnected evidence base which creates a supportive means to providing solutions to complex issues and problems (Cohen et al. 2018: 3). Respecting this, it was necessary to determine a paradigmatic philosophy that could best support my research focus surrounding children's freedoms in relation to play and could enable deeper understandings and explanans to emerge. Alignment with an 'accepted model or pattern' and way of working could therefore offer my research the 'promise of success' (Kuhn, 1962: 23).

I therefore began with a brief consideration of key ontological, epistemological, and axiological differences associated with the opposing paradigmatic positions of deductive positivist and inductive interpretivist philosophical traditions. This allowed me to consider my research in relation to this positivist-interpretivist spectrum and enabled alignment to the most appropriate system of beliefs which would help guide me as researcher in a range of fundamental ways including epistemological positioning and choice of method (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 105).

### **3.2 Positivism**

Prior to the 1980's research was predominantly a quantitative matter positioned within the positivist paradigmatic framework (Badenhorst, 2005:

69). Here, philosophical consideration of social science is a structured method bringing together deductive logic and empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover, confirm and validate probabilistic causal relationships which enable the prediction of human activity (Neuman, 1994: 63). This ontology of validation seeks verification of scientific truth and knowledge which is devoid of human bias or misperceptions (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 176) and is objectively independent of social actors (Saunders et al. 2009: 119). The positivist epistemology deductively seeks to discover law-like generalizations in order to support empirical hypothesis-testing and the growth of knowledge (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 5; Cohen et al. 2018: 174; Saunders et al. 2009: 119). In addition, Guba and Lincoln (1994: 107) suggest a 'one-way mirror' notion of epistemology with investigated 'object' independent of the investigator with research conducted from a value-free axiological objective stance (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 6; Saunders et al. 2009: 119) with researcher independent of the data.

### **3.3 Interpretivism**

While this positivist philosophy sits at one end of the paradigmatic spectrum, Guba and Lincoln (1994: 110) identify a postpositivist shift to an ontology of critical realism focused on falsification rather than validation. They go on to clarify a range of qualitative postmodern paradigms positioned at the interpretivist end of this spectrum (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 164). These include 'critical theory', 'constructivism' as well as inclusion of an additional elaboration by Heron and Reason (1997: 289-290) of the 'participatory/cooperative' paradigm. The common thread here is an anti-positivist subjective interpretation of the world and a rejection of human actions as governed by generalised universal laws (Cohen et al, 2018: 17). However, although this indicates a broad range of interpretivist paradigms, due to the limitations of this study, my focus will necessarily remain focussed on positivism and interpretivism.



Ontologically speaking, the interpretivist philosophy is characterised by inductive reasoning which concerns itself with the subjective, socially constructed, interactive and varied nature of reality (Saunders et al. 2009: 119). This helps clarify experiences of others and thus 'demystify' social reality (Cohen et al, 2018: 17). This relativistic interpretation of a given field represents the human consciousness's perspective and subjective social knowledge of the world through rational engagement with it, experience of it and empirical observation of it (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 176). This overlaps with epistemologically transactional/subjective judgements and 'value-mediated' findings that seek to coalesce around 'consensus' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 110-112). It is supported through a socially reconstructed empathetic concern for the individual that enables interpretation through robust processes of critical subjectivity (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 168). For Cohen et al. (2018: 19) this enables interpretation of multiple and complex realities through a focus on agentic actions and 'behaviour-with-meaning' (Cohen et al. 2018: 19). Furthermore, the axiological premise within interpretivist philosophies, in contrast to the positivist 'value-free' position (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 6), is very much a 'value-bound' proposition where articulation of these values throughout lends significant credibility to the research findings (Saunders et al. 2009: 119). These value judgements, and indeed the choice of topic, philosophy, and data collection method(s) underline this value-laden commitment (Ibid., 116).

### **3.4 Positioning my Research**

The consideration of these paradigmatic polar opposites suggested an alignment of my research with the interpretivist paradigm. The rationale for my study, based on seeking to make sense of the differences in the way children play between two localities, indicated a need for an ontological emphasis on inductive reasoning to clarify social realities. In addition, my playworker positioning suggested the need for a relativistic interpretation of this contextualised play through a conscious and subjective understanding of these unique children's geographies, driven by my own reasoned

engagement, experience and observational practice (Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 176). Epistemologically, the overlapping need for subjective judgments within the interpretivist paradigm was evident in the contextual empathetic concern for the children. This was essential to support my interpretivist stance through robust processes of critical subjectivity (Ibid., 168) which would enable 'value-mediated' findings to coalesce around 'consensus' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 110-112). In relation to my overarching question regarding children's freedom to play, this would enable a focus on agential 'intra-actions' of play (Barad, 2007: 139) as well as 'behaviour-with-meaning' as a means to interpreting multiple and complex realities (Cohen et al. 2018: 19). Again, an epistemological overlap would suggest that the focus of my paper, essentially to promote novel understandings of play, is very much driven by a value-laden axiology in contrast to the value-free axiological premise of the positivist paradigm. Herron (1996: 12) considers the need to articulate these axiological values (of human flourishing) throughout the research, which for Saunders et al. (2009: 116) also adds significant credibility to the research outcomes.

I should note at this point that my original intention had been to premise my research on a thematic data analysis extrapolated from data collected through a focus group discussion. This was to involve eight staff, who are responsible for 'supporting' the children's play action across both OSC settings, as highlighted in my rationale (1.2). However, the fate of this intended method fell victim to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lock-down. My planned data collection, therefore, could no longer proceed. This necessitated a substantial rethink of research method to a desktop literature review.

### **3.5 Formulating a Narrative Approach**

In relation to my rationale and questions raised, therefore, the desktop review needed to incorporate analysis, critical evaluation and synthesis of relevant existing knowledge from the literature, enabling greater insights to

emerge which contribute to a greater 'understanding of the world' (Hart, 2018: 3). An extensive range of literature, relevant studies, information and knowledge is available to support my literature review. This suggested a need for of a selective literature focus typically associated with the traditional 'narrative review' (Cronin et al, 2007: 1). Furthermore, Hart (2018: 93-94), who referring to 'narrative review' as 'scholastic (traditional) review', points to an interpretivist bias with interpretative processes of 'tightly reasoned critical evaluation' from wide-ranging relevant sources which, he suggests, generate 'greater levels and degrees of understanding'. Smeyers and Verhesschen (2001: 78) develop this view further pointing to the potential for the interpretive characteristics of narrative analysis to support strong knowledge creation. For Cohen (2018: 694), this positions the roots of narrative analysis in the social constructivist paradigm where meanings and behaviours are 'socially situated and socially interpreted'. This, however, contrasts with the more clinically based systematic literature review that requires critical evaluation and synthesis of all relevant literature (Cronin et al, 2007: 39), which is more concerned with reducing doubt and validating answers to guide decision making (Hart, 2018: 99).

Therefore, alignment with the more traditional narrative review seemed most appropriate for my thesis, with its broader scope and critically evaluative processes that support development of understandings about 'almost anything' (Hart, 2018: 95). For Cohen (2018: 664-665) it presents a powerful tool for enabling events to 'catch fire' in a 'truly qualitative' powerful, human and integrated way.

### **3.6 Towards a theoretical method.**

As the introduction to this thesis indicates, my method needed to account for both sides of the same autotelic/instrumental 'play coin', so that the former, less dominant side (autotelic), could be brought into view. In addition, the seeming dominance of biopolitics in the worlds of children's play, highlighted in chapter two (2.7), was also a critical factor in my choice

of conceptual method. A further consideration was playwork's own dialectical premise (Russell, 2018: 45), again linked to the same autotelic/instrumental 'play coin' through its tautology of freedom and purpose (Cook, 2019: 129). Choosing my method drew me in two quite different, yet related possible directions. The first, the dichotomous battleground of the NSSC, to enable me to 'swim' against the instrumental flow. The second, the more reconciliatory post-modern 'new wave', to 'swim' with the autotelic flow of agential freedoms, assembled and infrastructured around a broad range of hybrid multiplicities (Oswell, 2013: 25).

A brief overview of the evolution of the 'New Social Studies of Childhood' (NSSC) shows that it emerged as a purported paradigmatic shift in the last two decades of the Twentieth Century (Moran-Ellis, 2010: 188; Ryan, P., 2008: 553; Tisdall and Punch, 2012: 249). It provided a sharp critical response to what was considered the traditional dominant theoretical domains of socialisation and developmental psychology (Tisdall and Punch 2012: 250). At the same time a new focus on children's rights was creating new space for children to be considered subjects in their own right (Moran-Ellis, 2010: 188) which helped support the 'new' sociology of childhood's call for a recognition of children's agentic rights and their role as social agents with a part to play in their own representation and social construction (Corsaro, 1997; James et al. 1998; James and James, 2004; Myall, 1994; Qvortrup et al. 1994). This was marked by a fundamental desire to bring children into view to combat their traditionally invisible status (Oldman, 1994: 41) and to fundamentally reconfigure children's status as 'naturally incompetent' future-orientated 'human becomings' to a new elevated position as competent 'human beings' in the here and now (Qvortrup, 1994: 2).

Playwork's own contradicting dialectic tensions (Russell, 2018: 44-45) would, at least on the surface, appear to naturally align with NSSC's dualistic premise. In this theoretical space, a binary conception straddles dichotomic commitments to both traditional normative theories of development and socialisation on one hand and the emancipatory liberation of the politically agentic child on the other (Prout, 2005: 1-2). However, I was

concerned that the opposing binarism of the NSSC would effectively box-in playwork's core messaging by pulling towards opposing polarities simultaneously. In terms of foregrounding autotelic play, I also questioned whether this method could escape a binary trap of bio-social, nature-culture, active-passive dualistic endpoints (Ibid., 7-8). In addition, play's instrumental utility cries out to biopolitical agendas as a tool and driver of cohesive social governance and progressive developmental notions of childhood (Powell and Wellard, 2007: 10). Driven not only through top down global and national policy, but also as already suggested, by advocates of play and indeed playwork's own underlying assumptions, this has resulted in a diminishment or even extinguishing of play's autotelic flame. Therefore, in seeking to address this in the best possible way I decided to look beyond the NSSC dualistic battleground to the 'new wave' conceptual space.

### **3.6.1 'New Social Studies of Childhood' Dualism Versus 'New Wave' Post-Dualism?**

As discussed in 3:6 above, a central tenant of the NSSC is the prioritisation of individual agency which plays out in stark contrast and often dismissive opposition to historically contingent socialisation and developmental theories of childhood (Ryan, 2008: 554). However, Thorne (2007: 150) suggests this binary opposition has contributed to 'a continuing wall of silence' between these two conceptual spaces. This has led to calls to reprioritise the 'excluded middle' (Prout, 2011: 8) and to energise a new discourse beyond these bio-social dualisms with a new focus on the 'hybridity' and 'multiplicity' of childhood as a 'new wave' conceptual space (Lee and Motskau, 2011: 7).

In order to reprioritise the 'excluded middle' (Prout, 2011: 8) in relation to the urban and rural OSC settings and their communities, I needed to understand the interconnected processes that radiate 'complexly, co-constitutionally' at the intersection of macro social-political and ordinary local micro geographies in the everyday playful lives of children (Horton and Kraftl, 2018: 218). Tisdall and Punch (2012: 254) extending support for the

possibilities of this ‘new wave’ approach, cite the tendency of the NSSC for static and ‘unhelpful dichotomies’ and support a need to refocus on variations in context, culture, progression, transitions and relationships. At the same time, Prout, a key proponent of the NSSC argues for a need to move beyond opposing social-biological dichotomic arguments, to reconnect with new or earlier valuable insights, and to recognise that childhood is ‘heterogenous, complex and emergent’ (Prout, 2005: 2). He also urges childhood studies to decentre the subject away from narrow polarities by seeking metaphors of ‘mobility, fluidity and complexity’ and proposes a novel language of ‘non-linearity, hybridity, network and mobility’ (Ibid., 2005: 109).

### **3.6.2 Towards a ‘New Wave’ Conceptual Positioning**

Having argued (3.6) that the NSSC might indeed limit attempts to foreground autotelic play, my decision, however, remained unclear. The NSSC premise of favouring political agency over future-orientated ends (Moran-Ellis, 2010: 188) still appeared, to a degree, to be supportive of my underlying emancipatory aims. The political positioning of the child could act as a two-fold binary opposition for enriching the dialectic polarity of autotelic play’s ‘freely chosen’ mantra, as well as an agentic counter to the opposing developmental dialectic polarity of instrumental play. This approach, however, still appeared to limit agentic ontological richness of relations that are necessary to provide a broader understanding of the ‘child-self, the social and the world’ (Oswell, 2013: 25). Furthermore, it exposes the limitations of NSSC dualistic lens for navigating powerful forces and processes that emanate from the dominance of biopolitics (see 2.7), which are multi-varied and are often ‘irreducible one to another’ (Lee and Motskau, 2011: 18).

However, I was unsure as to how the ‘new wave’ approach would resolve play’s tautologous dialectic of freedom and purpose (Cook, 2019: 129). Reflecting on my intrinsic-instrumental two sides of the ‘same coin’ metaphor, I turned to Norberto Bobbio’s suggestion that the ‘included

middle' should seek its own space between opposing polarities, which, by respecting rather than eliminating oppositions, is likened to 'two sides of the same coin that cannot be seen at the same time' (Bobbio, 1996: 7). Extending this to a 'turn-able' coin analogy, opened-up a metaphorical provocation for bringing the autotelic distinction (face of the coin) more into play at the heart of this biopolitical intersection.

The final factor to be considered in relation to the 'new wave' approach (at this biopolitical intersection) was playwork's own advocative narrative that tends to coalesce around an instrumentally progressive rhetoric (Sutton-Smith, 1997: 8). This would also seem to unavoidably feed the mechanistic ambitions of biopolitical power and human flourishing (Lee and Motskau, 2011: 9). In contrast, the autotelic side of the 'play coin' is, by definition and virtue, bound as an end-in-itself, and therefore transcends both the elevated child within the social sciences and the focus on the child in the political biosphere. This is relevant because the dominant and pervasive instrumental view marks a 'flight from ambiguity', marking a failure to capture the multiplicity of play's meanings, and an inability to appreciate the constructive, theoretical and analytical possibilities of ambiguity (Levine, 1995: 8). For Cook (2019: 124-125), this disambiguation and resulting negation of 'as-if' qualities represents a fabricated 'ideology of childhood', which subjects the child to 'definitional closure', diminishes the potency of alternative constructions and compromises the problematic of the child, seen as essential for childhood studies (Ibid., 129).

These arguments eventually persuaded me of the validatory merits for adopting a 'new wave' approach which would offer my research the best potential to reignite play's autotelic flame. It also appeared to provide more possibilities to disrupt the internal dynamics of these enmeshed instrumental and biopolitical entangled assumptions, which for Cook (2019: 129), have become so commonplace in the contemporary mainstream understanding of play. It would also seem to support a re-energisation of the diminishing childhood problematic that has come to dominate not only this progressive rhetoric of play (Ibid.) but also the biopolitical structures that seek to define a universal ideal for childhood (Freeman, 1998: 433). I

therefore took inspiration from Oswell's notion that children's agency might be 'assembled and infrastructured' to encompass a broad range of 'devices, materialities, technologies and other sentient bodies' as a starting point for my theoretical method (Oswell, 2013: 25). The final part of this chapter will explain the form that I decided upon for my infrastructured assemblage, which seemed most appropriate as the conceptual basis for the questions and themes to be explored in my narrative focus chapters.

### **3.7 De/Re-finishing the Method**

In defining and refining the finer details of my method, I drew on three papers that have utilised a 'new wave' conceptual method to focus in on a particular question, issue or area of interest. As a quasi-systematic review (Hart, 2018: 99), common ground was apparent between the researchers. All engage to varying degrees with the Deleuze and Guattarian notion of assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013) and all seek solutions beyond bio-social dualism. While play scholarship or play research which aligns with the 'new wave' thinking is limited (Russell, 2018: 49), two out of these papers are concerned with play.

The first paper by Horton and Kraftl (2018), perhaps aligns most closely to my own research provocation. Their comparison of three demographically proximate inner-city London playgrounds as a children's geographical study, considers how large-scale biopolitical processes and children's micro geographies co-constitutionally intersect complexly through the everyday lives of children. The assemblage of play is loosely linked to a 'new wave' conception which (while not defined as such) is centred around three 'multiplicities' based around constituents of 'social-material' the 'political', and the 'spatial' (Horton and Kraftl, 2018: 214). Relevant here, is that these three dimensions play out in my own research paper through multiplicities of *space* (local geographies of urban and rural OSC as well as connected communities) and *resource* (social-material; both human and nonhuman interactions as well as biopolitical power).



The second paper also linked to play (Lester, 2015) again highlights space, but here due to the specificity of 'nature' context, is more contained within a 'natural playground' assemblage made up of heterogenous elements of nature, play, childhood as well as space. The purpose of Lester's paper was to challenge and transform the separation of 'childhood in crisis rhetoric' in relation to nature (and play) set apart from the children's everyday spaces (Lester, 2015: 53). An intra-active interpretation of play (Ibid., 63) presents it as an emergent performative entanglement of bodies, materials, elements and affects 'as a fluid, discontinuous and indeterminate process' and reflects the dynamic fluidity and constantly diffracting forces of agential enactments (Barad, 2007: 168).

The final paper (Lee and Motskau, 2011) moves away from play and creates a framework of three clearly articulated multiplicities based more on a historical Foucaultian reading of childhood biopolitics (Ibid., 7). The function of the multiplicities was to engage at the biopolitical intersection where a device called the 'Mosquito Teen Deterrent' was introduced to deter congregating youths and quell a range of antisocial behaviours (Lee and Motskau, 2011: 12). The three multiplicities; 'life', 'resource' and 'voice' were proposed to better apprehend this biopolitical-driven initiative and for their potential use in further research relating to the biopolitics of children (Ibid., 18).

From these three papers, commonalities would appear to congregate around nonhuman material effects and human interactions, space and local geographies, politics/biopolitics, as well as intra-active fluid agential enactments. In addition, the research findings of Horton and Kraftl (2018: 220) (in the context of the three urban playgrounds) highlight a prevalence of rumours and urban myths. This also appeared to be relevant to the contrasting demographical focus of my thesis. I therefore decided that an assemblage of *time* would also be relevant to my paper. This relates, amongst other things to traditions, rituals, change and generational relationships which flow through the communities, schools, homes, including the OSC settings in my rationale, and are therefore an important

consideration in how children's play takes shape in a range of micro environments over time.

In relation to my narrative focuses in the following two chapters, I therefore decided upon a relevant core of multiplicities (in relation to my narrative questions and focus of the thesis), loosely based on the above quasi synthesis. An essential factor was the need to connect the complex, diverse and fluid entanglements that emerge at the intersections of children's lives, especially as they relate to play. The four multiplicities that emerged to support my narrative are: *resource*, *space*, *time*, and *agential enactment*. I have tabulated these below (Fig. 3.1) in order to highlight the heterogenous symbiotic elements that constitute the whole (assemblage) (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2013).

**Fig 3.1 - A dimensional assembly of four multiplicities**

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Space</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Agential Enactment</u>
human	social cohesion	tradition	autotelic play
nonhuman	local geographies	ritual	instrumental play
governance	community	change	power
politics	attachments	flow	ambiguity
biopolitics	home	generations	biopolitical childhood
material effects	schools		playwork
demographics	ECEC		indefinability
media	OSC		messiness
more than human	environment		
regulatory			
culture			
playwork			

## **Chapter 4 – Focus 1**

### **Play in a Biopolitical World: Can the 'Autotelic' Flame be Fanned?**

#### **4.1 - Introduction**

A 'new wave' conceptualisation of childhood, as indicated at the end of chapter three, will enable this narrative review focus to address relevant questions and themes through the 'more-than-human entanglements through which play emerges' (Horton and Kraftl, 2018: 231). The narrative will therefore explore three key areas (relating to the chapter's main question). The first will consider messiness as an essential function of play, while the second will take a critical look at the romanticisation of play. The last focus will take Huizinga's theory of play (Huizinga, 1949) as a basis for exploring the notion put forward by Cook (2019: 129) that 'tidbits' of earlier play theories have come to espouse a largely unquestioned narrow view of play. If the validity of some of these assumptions is unsecure, then, by extension, the validity and basis of some of the biopolitical interventions discussed in chapter two also become questionable.

#### **4.2 – The Messiness of play**

The 'intra-active' reading of play proposed by Lester, (2015: 63) (discussed in 3.7), views play intransitively as part of a process of fluidity, discontinuity and indeterminacy. This reflects a consideration of play which has united play theorists, researchers, academics, historians, psychologists and scientists alike, namely its sheer intangibility, indefinability and unfathomability (Santer et al. 2007: 69; Sutton-Smith, 2008: 80). For some, these efforts fall into 'silliness' (Sutton-Smith, 1997:1), while others point to the emotional and physical expressions of play which make it difficult to fully elucidate (Harker, 2005: 51). Paradoxical tensions prevail between the

seemingly simple and innate characteristics of play on one hand and complex and indefinable characteristics on the other (Voce, 2015: 21). This is supported by Bateson (2005: 13) who suggests that the apparent ease in recognizing play belies its complexity, with definition struggling to coalesce around consensus. Indeed, Harker (2005: 51, 59) believes that the living experiential features of play constantly transcend conceptual limits of discourse and thus theoretical 'modesty' is required. For Burghardt (2005: xiii) this suggests that 'much of what play entails may not be what it seems'. Seeking a way through this Sutton Smith (1997: 7-8) sees an important need for a 'rhetoric' or persuasive discourse to bring order to this ambiguity and chaos. Burghardt is even more forthright:

'The problem of defining play and its role is one of the greatest challenges facing neuroscience, behavioral biology, psychology, education and the social sciences generally.... In a very real sense, only when we understand the nature of play will we be able to understand how to better shape the destinies of human societies in a mutually dependent world, the future of our species, and perhaps even the fate of the biosphere itself.' (Burghardt, 2005: xii)

This call for a defining utopian understanding of play, from my own playworker perspective, raises some questions. Does play really require definitional closure? Is play's own intangibility as a messy, complex and ambiguous phenomenon a necessary defining feature? Is it the very 'intra-active', 'fluid, discontinuous and indeterminate' qualities of play (Lester, 2015: 63), that make it so unintentionally and consequentially so important and beneficial to children?

#### **4.2.1 - Embracing the Messy Matter of Play**

In spite of myriad attempts to articulate play, one definition would appear to reign supreme; a requirement for play to be a 'non-coerced' freedom, undertaken purely for its own sake as an end in itself and unencumbered by any external purpose (Cook, 2019: 129). With reference to the four

multiplicities (Fig 3.1), this highlights an autotelic understanding of play, as an heterogenous symbiotic element, within the assemblage of *agential enactment*. This assemblage is axiologically value laden through its specificity of 'agential intra-actions', through which, a unique grounded sense of self plays out as enactments within the continuous 'ebb and flow of agency' (Barad, 2007: 140). When enacted, the dimension of autotelic play, inextricably bound to this messy, complex and indeterminate nature of play, undergoes a 'reterritorialization'. This sparks further 'reterritorialization' of other dimensions of the multiplicity, including power, ambiguity and biopolitical child. This follows a 'deterritorialization' of the instrumental dimension, with a resulting positive 'metamorphosis' of the assembled multiplicity (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2013: 22).

Play though, is not an isolated phenomenon. The *resource* assemblage offers up 'more-than-social' dimensions (Kraftl, 2013: 17), including material effects, traditions and biopolitical power, which shape and are shaped by happenings in the child's world (including play) through a 'collective assemblage of enunciation' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013: 25). Thus, two, three or four-way entanglements across relevant multiplicities, can radically alter the nature of the individual and collective assemblage(s). For example, over-dominant biopolitical dictates might affect a 'deterritorialization' of agential playful enactments resulting in reduced children's freedom (Lester, 2015: 63). Conversely, increased opportunities for autotelic play not only affect a 'reterritorialization' of the child's freedom and power and resulting metamorphosis of *agential enactments*. They also affect dimensions of flow, change, human, nonhuman, community, geographies, attachments, and biopolitics which experience 'deterritorialization' or 'reterritorialization' accordingly, with corresponding ( $\pm$ ) metamorphosis of assembled multiplicities (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2013: 22). As Barad (2007: 140) indicates 'it is through specific intra-actions that phenomena come to matter-in both senses of the word'.

This is particularly relevant to the practice context of the two OSC settings discussed in my rationale (1.2), suggesting the nature of the assembled multiplicities (Fig 3.1), will reflect the discernible differences in play between

the two settings. In the urban community of the OSC, for example, dimensions such as social cohesion, children's geographies, and traditions will possibly suffer 'deterritorialization' as a result of elevated dimensional 'reterritorialization' of human and biopolitical power. The corresponding entanglement would possibly energise a 'reterritorialization' of play, but only as an instrumental function, while simultaneously effecting a 'deterritorialization' of the autotelic function and biopolitical power (child), resulting in a de-metamorphosis of *agential enactments* (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2013: 22). As a supportive tool for practice in the urban setting it could support an understanding that 'deterritorialization' of autotelic play is the result of multiple entanglements across the plane of assemblages. *Resource* dimensions could therefore be boosted to affect a 'reterritorialization' of autotelic functioning of the child such as human dimensions (scaffolded proximal support (Vygotsky: 1978: 86)) or material effects (props and equipment).

This conceptualisation helps create a picture of childhood as a life enmeshed in assemblages of force, flow and intensities that unfold and take shape in space and over time (Lester, 2015: 63). Practice that calls upon an 'intra-active' reading of play accepts the discontinuity, fluidity, indeterminacy, intangibility, and indefinability of play and therefore breaks ties with more conventional purpose driven instrumentality (Ibid.). From this flows an accepted promotion of *agential enacted* play with all its messiness, complexity, ambiguity, and unfathomability.

### **4.3 - Fracturing the Romantic Idyl**

Play is often romantically glamorised as an uncorrupted adult-free form of expression and a primeval 'original condition' (Cook: 2019: 123). This glorification of play as a nostalgically alluring scared childhood idyl of yesteryear, often promoted as such to the adult world (Voce, 2015: 18), is epitomised by William Blake's poem the 'Nurse's Song':

When the Voices of children are heard on the green

And laughing is heard on the hill,  
 My heart is at rest within my breast  
 And everything else is still...

... Well, well, go and play till the light fades away  
 And then go home to bed.  
 The little ones leaped and shouted and laugh'd  
 And all the hills echoed. (Blake, 1901)

Such a romanticised vision of play, often seen as a historical antidote to industrial expansion, retains its desirability for many advocates of play (Voce, 2016: 18). The 'Charter for Play' (Play England, 2009: 3), for example, responding to increased urban living, calls for children to be afforded more time, space and freedom to enjoy playful, carefree and fulfilled lives. Others, such as Brown (2009: 147) extol play's virtues as pure, innocent and a joyful birth-right of childhood. Ryan (2012: 445) connects this concern for nature and being, rather than becoming of the child, to a Rousseauian romantic discourse premised on an authentic child who 'lives and is unconscious of his own life' (Rosseau, 1989: 70). For Ryan, (2008: 570), Rosseau's ideas promote a 'love of self' through which individual virtue can emerge. Kehily (2015: 4), going further, casts children in a state of uncontaminated innocence, purity and natural goodness, spiritually close to God, with a purity that needs to be protected so that children can express themselves creatively and freely.

#### **4.3.1 - A Contemporary Rural and Urban Perspective through the Vista of Blake, Bruegel and the Oppies.**

The idyl portrayed in Blake's poem would appear, to a degree, to resonate with the small community of the rural OSC setting discussed in chapter one. While demographically, the community is a far cry from Blake's pastoral idyl of a 'green and pleasant land' (Blake, 1987), it is common in the evenings

and weekends to hear (from within the setting) children's playful shouts and voices ringing in the streets and green spaces of the village. It is hard to imagine, though, that this play always represents the 'purest expression of humankind' (Brown, 2009: 5) or is untainted by darker or less socially acceptable behaviours. It does demonstrate, however, a high level of adult-free autonomy and spatial freedom which would seem less available for the children who attend the urban OSC. The assembly of multiplicities (Fig. 3.1) suggests a boosted metamorphosis (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2013: 22) of *agential enactment* for children from the rural OSC through dimensional 'reterritorialization' across the multiplicities including rituals, traditions, generations (*time*); community, social cohesion, attachments, culture (*space*); human, nonhuman and demographics (*resource*). Conversely, my observations in the urban setting would suggest a 'deterritorialization' of children's power largely as a result of elevated 'reterritorialization' of adult human, and biopolitical dimensions of power and 'deterritorialization' of dimensions of social cohesion, traditions, generations and attachments.

Intriguingly, the autonomous freedom enjoyed by children in the rural OSC community, also appears to reflect Pieter Brueghel's striking late sixteenth-century painting *Kinderspiel (Children's Games)* (Bruegel, 1506). Varied interpretations of this unique playful scene include a catalogue recording of games (Orme, 2001: 166-167) and a connecting of childhood with human folly (Hindman, 1981: 447). Contrastingly, Orrock (2012: 13-14) places the painting contextually in an Antwerp humanist society that pedagogically valued play, as well as children's freedom to explore natural environments beyond urban confines. Considering it is over five hundred years since *Kinderspiel* was painted, parallels appear to exist, rather surprisingly, with children's play in the rural community connected to the OSC setting. Indeed, much of the play action in Bruegel's painting, such as leapfrog, blind man's bluff, tug-of-war, piggy-backing, fence climbing, tree climbing and rough-and-tumble, (Ibid., 21) would not seem out of place in the contemporary rural setting. Furthermore, the geographical proximity to local woodland and riverway also mirrors Bruegel's painting, supporting similar autonomous freedoms. Perhaps this is not so surprising following Iona and Peter Opie's



seminal folk-lore cataloguing of street play in the UK in the 1950's and 1960's (Opie and Opie, 1969), which also identifies many of the same games, suggesting a significant historical transcendence to children's play.

Relevant here is the dimension of change (Fig. 3.1) and its connection to the notion of mutually constituted 'space, time, and matter' through the iterative nature of intra-activity (Barad, 2007: 181). This intra-play of continuity and discontinuity, stability and instability reflect the inherently varied 'spacetime-matterings' which are so vital to the becoming of the world (Ibid.) and whose interwoven dynamics impact directly on *agential enactments* of play in the two OSC communities. The assembled multiplicities (Fig. 3.1) reflect this through dimensions of tradition, ritual, change, generations, community, environment, human, and material effects which are mutually connected through the changing or continuous nature of flows of entanglement across the assembled multiplicities. However, the dimension of change is not only connected to the micro contexts of children's lives but extends to macro biopolitical systems and governance (Foucault, 2008: 331). As Alanen (2001: 142) suggests, it is through the generational dimension of adult-child relationships that social structures become more or less enduring as a stable feature of social systems and potentially extending beyond local relations, to wider global social systems. Orrock also brings this biopolitical dimension to Bruegel's 'Kinderspiel', suggesting a humanist understanding of childhood which valued play for promoting appropriate conduct and developing physical skills (Orrock, 2012: 22). She also connects the humanist understanding of play to education, but more as a tool for refreshing the mind from serious pursuits (Ibid., 15).

My own playworker view of Bruegel's painting captures a vista of largely adult-free play which also includes less-savoury aspects of play such as playing with excrement and pulling hair. It indicates an acceptance of play for its own sake, yet in relation to the other side of the 'play coin', it also appears to value play for its instrumental benefits to society, indicating a biopolitical concern, channelled through play, for human flourishing (Orrock, 2012: 14). This suggests that contemporary truth-revealing discourses of play also reflect, in relation to Bruegel's depiction of play, a historically

transcendence of play's tautology of 'freedom and purpose' (Cook, 2019: 129).

#### **4.3.2 Cleansing Play and the Reality of Practice**

The less socially acceptable side of play appears to be largely ignored in the literature, possibly resulting from a desire to retain the romantic idly (Russell, 2013: 169). Opie and Opie (1969: 10-11) however, suggest that play is often seen as less than positive by adults with children sometimes viewed as troublesome. Children appear to naturally seek out uncertainty in play, such as rough and tumble, play-fighting, teasing and use of language with some of the resulting behaviours, again, being negatively perceived as threatening, dangerous and antisocial (Lester and Russell, 2008: 11). Chudacoff (2007: 16), takes a different view and positions such spontaneous and informal play as a subversive and unauthorised generational subaltern battle against late nineteenth century adult instrumentalization of play through attempts to domesticate it (with toys), make it acceptable, and to attribute pedagogical and educational significance to it.

In today's contemporary world instrumental cleansing of play would appear to project through biopolitical mechanisms of government, institutions, and policy (Lester and Russell, 2008: 42). Within the regulatory context of OSC, for example, the HSCS (Scottish Government, 2017a: 9-10), demonstrate a correctional tone with safe and clear expectations of behaviour. For new playworker staff, encountering play-fighting or rough and tumble play for the first time, is often extremely challenging and it is common to observe a strong urge to reign the play back to something that would seem more socially acceptable. For the novice playworker, this practical conundrum is swathed in a milieu of micro and macro contradictions. It is worth looking at this more closely through the 'new wave' lens and method (Fig. 3.1) to consider possible implications for practice.

Taking the dimension of human (playworker initiate) as a conceptual starting point I will briefly explore 'coming to accept play-fighting' at this unique interface of practice. As Lester (2015: 62) suggests, assemblages of forces, flows and intensities 'produce and solidify in space and consolidate in time'. Unadulterated play-fighting lifts the dimensions of power and autotelic play function of the child resulting in an elevated metamorphosis of *agential enactment* (Deleuze and Guatarri, 2013: 22). An initial state of 'deterritorialization' for the playworker's human dimension is conflated further through dimensional entanglements of regulation, biopolitics, traditions, generations and child bio-power. Preconceptions of the role and nature of playwork also materialise across the dimensional spectrum, including biopolitics, governance, education, demographics media, traditions, and generations. However, the playworker novice, over time, experiences a 'reterritorialization' which emerges as the 'human' dimension (playworker) is reshaped by novel entanglements of new traditions, rituals, culture and environment, themselves established in the setting over *space* and *time*. A virtuous cycle therefore is initiated where human 'reterritorialization' is initiated which in turns adds to the 'reterritorialization' of power and autotelic functioning of the child while also effecting 'deterritorialization' on dimensions of biopolitical power and regulatory domination. The consequence, and emergent 'ethic of resistance' though 'resistance-based professionalism' (Giamminuti and See, 2017: 43), where government policy becomes mediated through new value systems (Gold et al. 2003: 131).

The HSCS continue this desire for play's softer edge and a need to cocoon the child in a safe world of 'fun' and instrumentality (Scottish Government, 2017a: 7), with emphasis on conflict resolution and positive relationships (Ibid., 8-9). Reinforcing the romantic idyl further, the 'Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Action Plan' (Scottish Government, 2013b: 7) states that 'the fun and pleasure of playing is a vital part of a happy childhood'. This perfect view of play would appear to locate play as separate from the everyday lives of children. However, Sicart (2014: 2) disagrees, positing that play brings with it the whole gamut of humanity which is rooted in the world itself. Cook

(2019: 133) more forcefully suggests that this projected need for comfort in play offers a very limited view of 'pedi-ludens', which serves to undermine the necessity of the productive child and ambiguity of play. Lester (2015: 162) is even more critical of this limiting view and resulting diminishing problematisation of the child. He suggests that Rosseau's romanticised notion of play, as an expression of natural innocence and wonder, energises a perceived need for the child to find salvation outside the everyday world, and thus represents a removal of childhood from the frame of modern thought altogether (Ibid.).

#### **4.4 - 'Tidbits' of Uncontested Truths and the Unstable Premise of Biopolitical Interventions**

Cook (2019: 129) suggests that much of the contemporary literature and discourse on play, including playwork's own truth-revealing discourse, is premised on 'tidbits' of play theory which harken back to Huizinga's seminal 'Homo Ludens' (1949) and others that followed such as Roger Callois (1961). Cook (2019: 126) believes that, many of these contemporary theorisations have become taken for granted as uncontested truths. In the context of this narrative focus, it is therefore worthy of further consideration.

##### **4.4.1 Taking from Huizinga and Others**

One of Huizinga's most significant postulations on play is its unique 'quality of freedom' which must be voluntary (Huizinga, 1949: 7). This understanding has achieved almost universal acceptance and is not in question here, except in the context of its instrumental 'deterritorialization' of the free, non-coercive element. Another such theoretical 'tidbit' of Huizinga, projected to the present day contemporary, is his suggestion that the 'original play element' gradually recedes over time as 'cultural phenomena' emerge through 'higher' forms of socially ordered play (Huizinga, 1949: 46). Callois, however is critical of this position, and in

marked contrast to Huizinga, positions play as an unproductive 'occasion of pure waste' (Callois, 1961: 5). Here we have two 'tidbits'; the first (Huizinga, 1949: 46), play as a civilizing activity; the second (Callois, 1961: 5), play as non-productive, which have come to underpin much of modern contradictory understandings of play. This is evident, for example, in the rearticulation of article 31 by the CRC which emphasises the importance of both positions, firstly, for supporting 'social, moral and emotional development' and shaping culture and communities (CRC, 2013: 8-9), and secondly, for emphasising play's 'non-productive' requirement (2013: 4, 13). This juxtaposition lies at the heart of play's purposeful instrumentality which on one hand drives much of policy and on the other threatens to smother play's more agential non-productive autotelic side; again underpinning playwork's own dialectic of freedom and purpose (Russell, 2018: 46)

Further questions remain regarding the conceptual validity of some of Huizinga's other theories on play (Spariosu, 2015: 19; Hendricks, 2006: 23). For example, the notion that 'play is distinct from ordinary life' (Huizinga, 1949: 9) would appear to be undermined by Huizinga's own paradoxical arguments surrounding play and seriousness. This is evident in his own citation of an interactive son-father playful exchange with a train (Ibid., 8). The fact that the child is consciously aware of 'only pretending' suggests the child must also be aware when not pretending, with a resulting foot in both the outside and real world. This undermines Huizinga's assertion that play represents a 'stepping out' from 'ordinary' or real life (Ibid., 9). In this example, the paradoxical ambiguity of play and seriousness, just as Huizinga suggests, would appear to collide in a playful seamless flow with the child's feigned importance reflected in the train engine's need to remain real so as not to upset the carriages. As a result, the child's conscious perception of what it means to play in reality while simultaneously playing (irrationality) outside reality would suggest that the cultural everyday world of the child is indeed feeding and is subsumed within the play process itself. This suggests a creative internalisation of the adult world, society and culture (Corsaro, 2005: 18-19). Similarly, James and James (2004:13) view childhood as constructed through the blending of complex social structures,

and the actions of people going about their everyday lives. However, the social status afforded childhood is impacted by these cultural and political structures which bear down on children's lives and correspondingly act to constrain or liberate what children do in their everyday lives (Ibid., 11). Sicart (2014: 1) expresses this clearly by suggesting that play is an essential 'mode of being human' from which usefulness, functionality and positivity flow as a 'portable tool for being' in the world we live. He goes on to suggest that play represents a complex multiplicity of interrelations with and between the constituents of everyday life (Ibid., 2).

This understanding of play as an expression of being in the world, and thus, an extension of humanity, inevitably positions play beyond the Rousseauian world of self-contained ludic innocence and purity, and therefore mirrors everyday life itself in all its messiness, complexity and ambiguity. As Sicart (Ibid, 2) eloquently puts it, 'play is a manifestation of humanity, used for expressing and being in the world'.

#### **4.4.2 - Questioning the 'Tidbits'**

As discussed in 4.3, the biopolitics of progress, which is manifested through institutional policy, also shies away from locating play within the real everyday lives of children and would appear to prefer the more romantic view of play minus its ugly side. Resonating with Huizinga's positioning of play as 'stepping out' of reality (Huizinga, 1949: 9), this, as Cook (2019: 133) suggests, points to an increasingly narrow institutional definition of play based on questionable 'tidbits' of historical assumptions (Ibid., 129). This would perhaps suggest that modern use of these 'tidbits', by logical extension', may also be potentially flawed or at the very least, less valid. Within my framework of multiplicity, this emphasises a significant 'reterritorialization' of national biopolitical power, which, through a metamorphosised *resource* assemblage, empowers the instrumental 'reterritorialization' dimensions of schools and ECEC. Relating this back to my title question, the unintended casualty here is the child's agential capacity through 'deterritorializations' of power and intrinsic functioning. The

resulting loss of the essential ambiguity of play, therefore, detrimentally impacts on the nature of the *agential enactment* assemblage and effective functioning freedom of the child to play. Here, Foucaultian governance and power would appear to seek rationality beyond the individual child through progressive objectives of state (Foucault, 2008: 313).

## **Chapter 5 – Focus 2**

### **Play in Scotland: Can the Politics of Progression Change the Narrative?**

#### **5.1 Matching the Strategic Vision to the Global Context**

Both the 'Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision' (Scottish Government, 2013a) and subsequent 'Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Action Plan' (Scottish Government, 2013b) were conceived, as an obligatory requirement, following a rearticulation of article 31 by the 'Committee on the Rights of the Child' (CRC). The objective of this 'General Comment No. 17) was to strengthen the application of article 31 globally and raise its profile, awareness and understanding among nation states (CRC, 2013: 3-4).

The Play Strategy for Scotland ('Vision' and 'Action Plan') cuts straight to the chase proclaiming with Foucaultian intent, 'we want Scotland to be the best place to grow up' (Scottish Government, 2013a: 1; 2013a: 1). Throughout, the strategic vision aligns with play's own 'truth revealing discourses' and tautology of freedom and purpose (Cook, 2019: 129). However, the *agential enactment* assemblage (Fig. 3.1) would appear squeezed-out throughout by the overriding force of state interests. For example, ambitions to invest in children's play are seen as a critical driver of Scotland's social, economic and environmental wellbeing as well as being essential for strengthening children's ability to achieve their full potential and to become healthy, productive members of society (Scottish Government, 2013a: 6). Indeed, with such ambitions, one may be tempted to wonder just how 'free' can children's play ever be under such state objectives and obligation? Along the plain of assemblages (Fig. 3.1) such politicisation of play will undoubtedly change the dynamic of *resource*, which, through such ambition, will unavoidably lead to entanglements of 'deterritorialization' with intra-active dimensions of power, freedom, biopolitics (child) leading to the child's reduced capacity for *agential action* (Barad, 2007: 178).



Similarly, the CRC general comment appears to swim in this tautology of freedom and purpose. However, in marked contrast it places a significant emphasis on the child's right to time and space, free from adults (CRC, 2013: 13), and, as discussed in 4.4.1, includes a notable emphasis on the more non-purposeful autotelic side of play:

Children's play is any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves; it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. ....play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and ... undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end. Play involves the exercise of autonomy, physical, mental or emotional activity, and has the potential to take infinite forms, either in groups or alone. These forms will change and be adapted throughout the course of childhood. The key characteristics of play are fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity'.

(CRC, 2013: 5-6)

Play being non-productive and for its own sake is a significant pronouncement (amongst other things). It comes on the back of two important reports by Lester and Russell (Voce, 2015: 19); 'Play for Change' (Lester and Russell, 2008) and 'Children's Right to Play' (Lester and Russell, 2010). Both reports emphasise the importance of child-initiated intrinsic play as opposed to controlled instrumental purposeful play (Lester and Russell, 2008: 10; Lester and Russell, 2010: xi). They also make a case, based on play's intrinsic heterogeneous characteristics of 'unpredictability, spontaneity, goallessness and personal control' (Lester and Russell, 2008: 12), for positioning development as a non-linear and non-normative lifelong process involving interrelations between brain, body, genes, relationships, communities and environment. The result, an accrual of resilience and benefits linked to *emotional regulation, pleasure and enjoyment and promotion of positive feelings, stress response systems, creativity, learning, and attachment to people and place*. (Ibid., 20-21). From this Lester and Russell (2008: 13) believe that play provision should be judged according to its ability to enable children to play rather than enabling purposeful outcomes. In relation to England's ECM educational outcomes

(DfES, 2004), they propose that such an approach while not necessarily offering guarantees, does, however, make the realisation of these outcomes far more likely (Lester and Russell, 2008: 13).

### **5.1.1 Who's Agenda?**

The 'Play Strategy for Scotland; Our Vision' also refers directly to the report by Lester and Russell (2008), noting that play impacts on the flexibility of the brain, elevating the child's future potential (Scottish Government, 2013a: 7). It also references and makes the same connection with play and ECM outcomes (DfES, 2004) made by Lester and Russell (2008: 12) but relates it instead to the CfE outcomes (Scottish Government, 2011a) (see also 2.5). The crucial difference here, however, is that Lester and Russell (2008: 12) explicitly connect these outcomes to intrinsic autotelic play, whereas the 'Play Strategy for Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2012a: 8) removes this, making the connection to play only in general terms. Furthermore, while there is a fleeting reference to play for its own sake in both play strategy documents (Ibid., 2013a: 5; 2013b: 5), both immediately revert back to a developmental and political rhetoric focussed on individual and national interests and wellbeing. Similarly, the importance of free play experiences (in rich play environments) is again only referenced in passing (Scottish Government, 2013a: 17). These evasions or omissions are especially puzzling. Even more so when considered in the context of the CRC (2013: 5-6) which specifically emphasises these understandings of play. Therefore, as obligations passed on to nation states, their evasion is even harder to comprehend. One possible reason for this is that obligation to mandate children's rights in Scotland is not yet a statutory requirement. Furthermore, a great deal of political activity regarding children took place between 2010-2015 and it is within this context and against this backdrop that Scotland's 'Play Strategy' needs to be considered.

With regard nation states implementing obligations of the UNCRC (UNICEF, online), Franklyn and Franklin (1996: 103) state that the 'word should not be mistaken for the deed'. The Scottish Government paper 'Consultation on

the Rights of Children and Young People' (Scottish Government, 2011b) paved the way for a dedicated Children's Rights Bill (Tisdall, 2015: 770). However, political fears over children's legal status (Ibid., 75) effectively hindered the process. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (2014), with its powerful needs-based wellbeing bias tended to take precedence over children's rights (Tisdall, 2015: 769). Often credited to a tension between 'children's right to care' and 'children's right to self-determination' (Ryan, 2008: 562) it goes some way to explaining the wellbeing focus that dominates the strategic vision for play in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2013a; 2013b). In addition, the regulatory 'Shanarri' framework (Scottish Government, 2013c: 6) and 'care plans' for all children in the HSCS's (Scottish Government, 2017a) create a 'one-size-fits-all' needs-based agenda which largely side-lines agentic functioning for more developmental-based outcomes (Wyness, 2006: 46). For the individual child this focus is clearly summed up in the 'UNCRC: The Foundation of Getting it Right for Every Child' document (Scottish Government, 2013c: 7); 'for children to reach their full potential, they must individually reach the best outcome of each of the well-being indicators, as appropriate to their age and stage of development'.

## 5.2 Concluding Thought

Against such a storm of biopolitical power, the question regarding children's 'freedom to play: can adults really ever let go?' would appear to be, on the face of it a resounding no. However, this belies the reality for some provision which espouses autotelic play through what Giamminuti and See (2017: 43) refer to as a practice-based ethic of resistance. In addition, thanks to the important research by the likes of Lester and Russell (2008; 2010), global dictates are beginning to take note, for example the CRC (2013) above (5.1).

In addition, looking forward, the prospects for play in Scotland hold more promise. In September 2020, the Scottish Government committed to

enshrining the UNCRC into law by the end of 2021 (Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS), 2020). This is likely to increase obligations on Scotland as a nation to embrace the UNCRC fully (UNICEF, Online). In addition, a recently established Scottish OSC governmental policy team has been charged with undertaking a major review, consultation and rethink of OSC delivery in Scotland (Scottish Government, Online, 2019), which offers the potential for the policy and regulatory context of OSC in Scotland to embrace more fully, play's heterogenic, less tangible and unproductive characteristics, for the benefit of the child, free of directives and obligations of the state.

## **Chapter 6 – Summary Conclusion**

### **6.1 Purpose Beyond the Research**

This thesis is underpinned by an axiological playwork ideal that children have the potential to acquire a host of benefits from unadulterated autotelic play experiences which are intrinsically motivated for no other purpose than the play itself. This underlying value laden premise is extended by a desire to make a difference to the lives of others. In support of this, the aim of this thesis is to generate novel understandings that might (re)inform practice within the two OSC settings for the benefit of children and a range of connected stakeholders, including staff, families, partner schools and the communities they serve. In practice, for example, it could help support new staff overcome initial preconceptions of what constitutes acceptable play (as discussed in 4.3.2). This aligns with an authentic commitment of this paper for ‘goodness’ (Tobin and Begley, 2003: 391) which is boosted by an emancipatory intent to improve children’s playful agential ‘intra-actions’ (Barad, 2007: 139) from which consequential benefits may flow. My thesis therefore has an underlying ‘quality of purpose’ in relation to practice, which is also ‘collaborative’ in nature and ‘transformative’ in intent (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007: 205-207).

Furthermore, beyond the locale, my findings might also be of interest to others, such as national umbrella organisations of Play Scotland or the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) and also the wider playwork and OSC sectors (nationally, UK wide and internationally). This could also include the recently established Scottish Government team (discussed in 5.3), tasked with creating Scotland’s first OSC policy framework (Scottish Government, 2019). There is also the possibility that my research may be of interest to journal publications linked to play and childhood studies, regulatory bodies such as the Care Inspectorate, and educational events such as the ‘Scottish Learning Festival’ (SLF).

## 6.2 Overview of Findings

As an emancipatory concern (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2007: 200), presenting these findings has a threefold purpose; to raise awareness of the politics of biopower, to energise a focus on autotelic play, and to highlight the questionable premise on which some of play's instrumental claims are based.

Firstly, perhaps the singular most striking finding of my research was the sheer pervasive force of biopolitics that appears to envelop all aspects of children's everyday lives, including play. In the national context of Scotland, global biopolitics concerning children emanate as directives from global bodies and organisations such as UNCRC, OECD and UNICEF. Chapter five explored how, through the CRC (2013) and 'Play Strategy for Scotland (Scottish Government, 2013a; 2013b), these directives translate into policy, everyday life and practice through biopolitical concerns, ambitions and agendas of state. As the strategic vision for play in Scotland demonstrates, these forces significantly politicise children, binding them to socially progressive priorities of the 'developmental state' (Lee, 2001: 5-6). This suggests that the consequence of this biopolitical power, in relation to the current strategic vision for play, has all but extinguished the autotelic flame of intrinsic play. Motives for these dominating Foucaultian biopolitical agendas are varied, many laudable, such as aligning with UN 'Sustainable Development Goals' (United Nations, 2015) to eliminate child poverty by 2030, to reduce inequality and raise attainment for all. With a nationalist agenda also dominating the political landscape in Scotland just now, this might explain a degree of urgency over these ambitions. Seen in this context, it is perhaps no surprise that the flame of autotelic play, with its defining lack of purpose, struggles to flicker, let alone stay alight. This may also help explain its almost total omission from the play strategy documentation, and this, despite clear directives and recommendations to the contrary from the CRC (2013) and the two reports by Lester and Russell (2008; 2010). It also might explain why the play strategy places such an emphasis on instrumental play, not only to drive prospects for children but

also the nation as a whole. As the 'Play Strategy for Scotland' highlights, 'play is not just crucial to the wellbeing of each child, it is essential to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Scotland as a whole' (Scottish Government, 2013b: 5).

The second part of my findings relate to my attempts to fan play's 'autotelic flame'. To this end, my narrative focus opens up, through an 'intra-active' reading of play (Lester, 2015: 63), the possibility that the sheer complexity, messiness and indefinability of play is something to be embraced rather than shunned. It also raises an important question as to whether the very ambiguity and seemingly unproductive unfathomability of play is what makes it so consequentially and unintentionally important and beneficial to children for making sense of the matter of the world (Barad, 2007: 140). My narrative also explored what appeared to be an inevitable entanglement between the messiness of play and the politics of power. Again, biopolitical powers seem determined to embrace a narrower more pure, romanticised and cleansed version of play, effectively running away from the ambiguous and non-productive reality of play (Cook, 2019: 133). My findings reveal an understanding of play which, through its complexity rather than simplicity, embraces the whole of life's rich tapestry with all its 'warts and all'. Not necessarily excluding Rousseauian naivety and joy, this understanding is therefore 'rooted in the world itself' (Sicart, 2014: 2). Again, for the child, agential enactments would appear to be at the heart of the matter, which through the unproductive messiness of autotelic play and associated freedoms are brought to the fore.

The final part of my findings suggest that some common contemporary projections of play tend to coalesce unquestionably around narrow interpretations of historical theories of play, some of which themselves are rather suspect. As my narrative focus in 4.4 reveals, some of the theoretical assumptions of Huizinga and Callois form much of the contemporary basis for understanding play which essentially comes down to, in its naked form, 'purpose' and 'non-purpose'. In the political biosphere this makes the 'purpose' dimension of play a particularly powerful tool within the biopolitical formation of childhood where the health, welfare and raising of children is

politically driven through ideologies and practices which are inextricably bound to the destiny of nations and its peoples (Rose, 1989: 45). The other questionable assumption that pervades contemporary understandings of play is the tendency to diminish the focus of play to one that sits outside reality. Discussed above in my 'fanning the autotelic flames' findings, it also connects back to Huizinga's 'stepping outside' life positioning of play alongside a Rousseauian view of play as pure innocence and goodness. However, the reality of play would appear from my findings to represent something quite different, namely something encompassing all facets of life (rather than outside its reality) as 'a manifestation of humanity, used for expressing and being in the world' (Sicart, 2014: 2).

### **6.2.1 The Method as a Navigational Tool**

As a 'navigational aid' (Lee and Motskau, 2011: 7), my chosen 'new wave' method, would appear to have been particularly effective. Allaying my initial concerns that it might struggle to sufficiently problematize due to its non-binary form, it turned out to be an extremely useful tool for confronting the biopolitical backdrop in a more subtle and less 'head-on' way compared to the NSSC dualistic approach. It provided a sense of balance which appeared to hold across the entangled plane of assemblages, providing a broader 'more-than-social' perspective (Kraftl, 2013: 17). Within this new wave conceptualisation all assembled entanglements constantly flow along a plane of constituents through enmeshed processes of 'reterritorialization' and 'deterritorialization'. This helped provide a vista rooted in the matter of the world itself (Barad, 2007: 140) through which surprising clarity would seem to emerge.

### **6.3 Ethics, Covid-19 and limitations**

As briefly mentioned in my methodology chapter (3.4), my original intention for my thesis had been to conduct a focus group discussion involving staff



from across both OSC settings. From this my intention had been to premise my research findings on a thematic analysis of the data collected. However, as discussed in 3.4, the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated a change in approach to a desk top narrative review. This radically altered the ethical positioning of my thesis. Prior to this change, my research proposal had undergone a process of seeking and receiving ethical approval through the University of Glasgow School of Education Research Ethics Committee (University of Glasgow, Online). This ensured that my proposal and research would fully comply with the University's ethical guidelines, the British Educational Research Association guidelines (BERA, 2018) as well as all relevant GDPR legislation (Data Protection Act, 2018). My application was also supported by a 'Plain Language' statement and appropriate consent forms for participants. The resulting switch, however, meant that ethical requirements were less onerous due to absence of human participation. However, my thesis has retained a strong ethical concern throughout to maintain authenticity, trustworthiness and goodness and to underpin the quality and robustness of the research (Tobin and Begley, 2004: 388). It has also encompassed a goodness of intent by remaining as faithful as possible to authors' intentions, presenting any information or data in the way that was originally intended, and through honesty in the 'art of meaning-making' in my interpretation and presentation of new insights (Tobin and Begley, 2003: 391).

The change of course for my research thesis also impacted on the limitations of my study. My intended focus group would have provided interactively produced data which would have enabled me to thematically and interpretatively make subjective judgements and 'value-mediated' findings that seek to coalesce around 'consensus' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 110-112). Furthermore, the rationale for this paper was premised on my own playworker observations and interpretations of play between the two OSC settings and were in effect just that, a personal perspective. This potential limitation was also reflected in my interpretative approach to literature and policy, which, while seeking quasi-literature consensus was unable to seek subjective interactive consensus through participant involvement.

## 6.4 Implications Beyond and for Future Research

'Freedom to Play: Will Adults Ever Really let go?'. Reconsidering this question in light of such powerful biopolitical forces raises concerns that it will only ever be a 'pipe dream'. My research, by taking a snapshot of a localised play phenomena, has revealed that the biopolitical pressure bearing down on the worlds of children's play is such that there would appear to be little chance of real freedom emerging for the child. However, my research has also shown that despite this, such as the rural community and the reality of practice discussed in 4.3, the autotelic flame is still alight, all be it only just.

The door is also open to a range of research possibilities beyond this thesis, possibly through further Ph.D. research for myself. In relation to my findings this might include exploring further the relationship between the global and national biosphere and the everyday worlds of children's play. Also, some of the more questionable assumptions that would appear to dominate the instrumental view of play are worthy of further investigation, particularly in relation to biopolitical power. I am also especially drawn to the idea of seeking to evidence further the power of autotelic play experiences for children as a counter to instrumental domination.

In my findings above (6.2), following Huizinga and Callois, I stripped the core message of play down to two quasi-thematic codes of 'purpose' and 'non purpose'. The 'purpose' element being the instrumental function, the dominant function and the bio-politic function. The 'non-purpose' being everything and nothing, irreducible to definitional form with all the ambiguity and intangibility rolled in to one. This space is dominated by reality and non-reality, joy and sadness, messy and tidy, silly and serious, productive and non-productive, interesting and boring, nice and nasty, safe and dangerous, social and antisocial and much more. Therefore, all this messy ambiguity and uncertainty need to be cherished, not ignored, if play is to be fully understood. This, as a tentative position, would be an ideal provocation for future research.

## Reference List

Alanen, L. (2001) 'Childhood as a generational condition: Children's daily life in a central Finland town' in L. Alanen and B. Mayall (eds) *Conceptualizing child-adult relations*, London: Falmer. Pp. 129-143.

Badenhorst, R. (2005) *Reasons for women to terminate a pregnancy: a qualitative study*, Magister Artium (Demography). University of Pretoria: Pretoria.

Barad, K. (2007) *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Bateson, P. (2005) 'The role of play in the evolution of great apes and humans' in A. Pellegrini and P. Smith (eds) *The Nature of Play: Great Apes and Humans*, London: Guildford Press. Pp. 13-24.

Bennett, J. (2006) 'New policy conclusions from Starting Strong II, An update on the OECD early childhood policy reviews' *European Early Childhood Research Journal*, 14: 2, Pp.141-156.

BERA (2018) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) London: British Educational Research Association @ [https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-for-Educational-Research\\_4thEdn\\_2018.pdf?noredirect=1](https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-for-Educational-Research_4thEdn_2018.pdf?noredirect=1) (last accessed 17/2/20).

Blake, W. (1987) 'From Milton', [1804-09] in *Poetry in English: An anthology* in V.A. De Luca, B. Rowland, S.M. Gall, R. Sullivan, A.K. Heatt and H. Weinbrot (eds) New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 502-503.

Blake, W. (1901) *Songs of innocence and songs of experience [1789]*, London: R. Brimley Johnson and Guildford: A.C. Curtis.

Bobbio, N. (1996) *Left and right: The significance of a political distinction*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1993) 'The ecology of cognitive development: Research models and fugitive findings' in R. Wozniak and K. Fischer (eds) *Development in context: Acting and thinking in specific environments*, Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. Pp. 3-44.

Brown, S. (2010) *Play: How it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*, London: Penguin Books Ltd.

Bruegel the Elder, P. (1506) *Die Kinderspiel*, Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Burghardt, G. M. (2005) *The genesis of animal play: Testing the limit*, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.

Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979) *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Caillois, R. (1961) *Man, play and games*, (Trans. M. Barash). Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary (2004), Online @ <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/media/investigation-by-cambridgeshire-constabulary-20040530.pdf> (last accessed 18/10/2020).

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. (asp 8) @ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted> (last accessed 23/3/20).

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS) (2020) @ <https://cypcs.org.uk/news-and-stories/scottish-rights-statute-set-to-mark-end-of-thirty-year-campaign/> (last accessed 16/11/20).

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2018) *Research methods in education*, 18<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Cole-Hamilton, I. and Gill, T. (2002) *Making the Case for Play: Building policies and strategies for school-aged children*, London: National Children's Bureau.

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2013) *General Comment no. 17*, Online @ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/51ef9bcc4.html> (last accessed 29/10/2020).

Cook, D.T. (2019) 'Panaceas of play: Stepping past the creative' in S. Spyrou, R. Rosen and D.T. Cook (eds) *Reimagining childhood studies*, London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic. Pp. 123-136.

Corsaro, W. A. (1997) *The Sociology of Childhood*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Corsaro, W. A. (2005) *The Sociology of Childhood*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Corsaro, W. A. (2017) *The Sociology of Childhood*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. California: Sage Publications.

Cronin, P., Ryan F. and Coughlan, M. (2008) 'Undertaking a Literature Review', *British Journal of Nursing*, 17: 1, Pp. 38-43.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2008) *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience*, New York: Harper Collins.

Data Protection Act 2018. (c. 12)

@ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted> (last accessed 20/12/19).

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2013) *A thousand plateaus*, (Trans. B. Massumi). New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for children*, London: DfES.

Duschinsky, R. (2012) 'Tabula Rasa and Human Nature', *Philosophy*, 87: 34, Pp. 509-529.

Foucault, M. (2008) *The birth of bio-politics. Lectures at the college de France, 1978-1979*, (Trans. G. Burchell). London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M (2009) *Security, territory, population. Lectures at the college de France, 1977-1978*, (Trans. G. Burchell). London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Franklin, A. and Franklin, B. (1996) 'Growing pains: The developing child right's movement in the UK' in J. Pilcher and S. Wagg (eds) *Thatcher's children: Politics, childhood and society in the 1980s and 1990s*, Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer. Pp. 94-113.

Fraser, S. (2006) *Authentic childhood: Experiencing Reggio Emilia in the classroom*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Toronto: Thomson Nelson.

Freeman, M. (1998) 'The Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights', *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 6, Pp. 433-444.

Gesell, A. (1925) *The Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child*, New York: The Macmillan Company.

Giamminuti, S. and See, D. (2017) 'Early Childhood Educators' Perspectives on Children's Rights', *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 25: 1, Pp. 24-49.

Gill, T. (2007) *No fear: Growing up in a risk averse society*, London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Gold, A., Evans, J., Early, P., Halpin, D. and Collarbone, P. (2003) 'Principled principals?: Values-driven leadership: Evidence from ten case studies of 'outstanding' school leaders', *Educational Management & Administration*, 31: 2, Pp. 127-138.

Groundwater-Smith, S. and Mockler, N. (2007) 'Ethics in practitioner research: An issue of quality', *Research Papers in Education*, 22: 2, Pp. 199-211.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) 'Competing paradigms in qualitative research' in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of qualitative research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Pp. 105-117.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005) 'Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences' in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Pp. 191-215.

Hakarrainen, P. (1999) 'Play and motivation' in Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen and R-L. Punamäki (eds) *Perspectives in activity theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harker, C. (2005) 'Playing and affective time-spaces', *Children's Geographies*, 3: 1, Pp. 47-62.

Hart, C. (2018) *Doing a literature review*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, Thousand Oaks CA, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage.

Hart, J. (2006) 'Saving children: What role for anthropology?' *Anthropology Today*, 22: 1, Pp. 5-8.

Heckman, J.J. and Masterov, D.V. (2007) 'The productivity argument for investing in young children', *Review of Agricultural Economics*, 29: 3, Pp. 446-493.

Henricks, T.S. (2006) *Play reconsidered: Sociological perspectives on human expression*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Heron, J. (1996) *Co-operative inquiry: Research into the human condition*, London: Sage.

Heron, J. and Reason, P. (1997) 'A participatory inquiry paradigm', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3, Pp. 274-294.

Hindman, S. (1981) 'Pieter Bruegel's children's games, folly, and chance', *The Art Bulletin*, 63: 3, Pp. 447-475.

Horton, J. and Kraftl, P. (2018) 'Three playgrounds: researching the multiple geographies of children's outdoor play', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 50: 1, Pp. 214-235.

Hughes, B. (2012) *Evolutionary playwork*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Huizinga, J. (1949) *Homo Ludens: A study of the play element in culture*, London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Ipsos MORI, (2002) @ <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/repercussions-soham-murders> (last accessed 18/10/20).



James, A. and James, A.L. (2004) *Constructing childhood: Theory, policy and social practice*, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

James, A., Jenks, C. and Prout, A. (1998) *Theorizing childhood*, Cambridge: Polity.

James, A. and Prout, A. (1997) *Constructing and reconstructing childhood*, London: RoutledgeFalmer. New York: RoutledgeFalmer, Taylor & Francis Inc.

Kehily, M. J. (2015) 'Understanding childhood' in M.J. Kehily (ed) *An introduction to childhood studies*, Maidenhead: Oxford University Press.

Kraftl, P. (2013) 'Beyond 'voice', beyond 'agency' beyond 'politics'? Hybrid childhoods and some critical reflections on children's emotional geographies', *Emotion, Space and Society*, 9, Pp. 13-23.

Kuhn, T.S. (1962) *The structure of scientific revolution*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Laming, Lord (2003) *The Victoria Climbié inquiry: Report of an inquiry by Lord Laming*, London: Crown Copyright.

Lee, N. (2001) *Childhood and society*, Maidenhead: Oxford University Press.

Leonard, M. (2016) *The sociology of childhood, children and generation*, LA, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: Sage Publications.

Lester, R. (2015) 'Posthuman nature: Life beyond the natural playground' in M. MacLean, W. Russell and E. Ryall, *Philosophical perspectives on play*, London and New York: Routledge. Pp. 53-68.

Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2008) *Summary Report. Play for a change. Play, policy and practice: A review of contemporary perspectives*, London: National Children's Bureau.

Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2010) *Children's right to play: An examination of the importance of play in the lives of children worldwide*, (Working paper No. 57), The Hague, The Netherlands: Bernard Van Leer Foundation.

Levine, D.N. (1985) *The flight from ambiguity: Essays in social and cultural theory*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Mayall, B. (1994) *Children's childhoods: Observed and experienced*, London: Falmer.

Meire, J. (2007) *Qualitative research on children's play: A review of recent literature*, Brussels: Kind and Samenleving.

Moran-Ellis, J. (2010) 'Reflections on the sociology of childhood in the UK', *Current Sociology*, 58: 2, Pp. 186-205.

Neuman, W.L. (1994) *Social research methodology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

OECD (Organisation for Economic and Co-operative Development),  
Online @ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/session/shib> (last accessed 20/04/20).

Oldman, D. (1994) 'Adult child relations as class relations' in M. Bardy, G. Sgritta, H. Wintersberger (eds) *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics*, Avebury: Ashgate Publishing.

Opie, I. and Opie, P. (1969) *Children's Games in Street and Playground*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Orme, N. (2001) *Medieval children*, New Haven, CN: Yale University Press.
- Orrock, A. (2012) 'Homo Ludens: Pieter Bruegel's children's games and the humanist educators', *Journal of Historians of Netherlands Art*, 4: 2, Pp. 1-42.
- Oswell, D. (2013) 'Realigning children's agency and re-socialising children in childhood studies' in F. Esser, M.S. Baader, T. Betz and B. Hungerland (eds) *Reconceptualising agency and childhood: New perspectives in childhood studies*, London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Palmer, S. (2015) *Toxic childhood: How the modern world is damaging our children and what we can do about it*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Orion Books Ltd.
- Parson, T. and Bales, R. (1956) *Family Socialization and Interaction Process*, London: Routledge.
- Piaget, J. (2006) 'The Stages of the Intellectual Development of the Child' in B. Marlowe and A.S. Canestrari (eds) *Educational Psychology in Context*, London: Sage Publications Ltd. Pp. 97-106.
- Pilcher, J. (1995) *Age Generation in Modern Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Play England (2009) *Charter for children's play*, Online @ <http://www.playengland.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/charter-for-childrens-play.pdf> (last accessed 12/10/20).
- Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group (PPSG) (2005) *Playwork Principles*, Cardiff: Play Wales.

Powell, S. and Wellard, I. (2007) *Policies and play: The impact of national policies on children's opportunities for play*, London: National Children's Bureau, Play England.

Prout, A. (2005) *The future of childhood*, London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Falmer.

Prout, A. (2011) 'Taking a step away from modernity: Reconsidering the new sociology of childhood', *Global Studies of Childhood*, 1: 1, Pp. 4-14.

Otterspeer, W. (2018) *In praise of ambiguity: Erasmus, Huizinga and the seriousness of play*, (Trans. V. Collingwood). Leiden: Leiden University Press.

Qvortrup, J. (1994) 'Childhood matters: An introduction' in M. Bardy, G. Sgritta, H. Wintersberger (eds) *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics*, Avebury: Ashgate Publishing.

Rainbow, P. and Rose, N. (2006) 'Biopower today', *BioSocieties*, 1, Pp. 195-217.

Rose, N. (1989) *Governing the soul: The shaping of the private self*, London: Routledge.

Rousseau (1921) *Emile, or Education [1762]*, (Trans. B. Foxley). London and Toronto: Dent and Sons, New York: E.P. Dutton.

Russell, W. (2013) *The dialectics of playwork: A conceptual and ethnographic study of playwork using Cultural Historical Activity Theory*, Doctoral Thesis, Gloucester: University of Gloucester.

Russell, W. (2018) 'Nomadic wonderings on playwork research' in P. King and S. Newstead (eds) *Researching play from a playwork perspective*, London and New York: Routledge. Pp. 39-55.

Ryan, K.W. (2011) 'The new wave of childhood studies: Breaking the grip of bio-social dualism', *Childhood*, 19: 4, Pp. 439-452.

Ryan, P.J. (2008) 'How new is the "new" social study of childhood? The myth of a paradigm shift', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 38: 4, Pp. 553-576.

Santer, J. Griffiths, C. and Goodall, D. (2007) *Free play in early childhood: A literature review*, London: National Children's Bureau.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research methods for business students*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Essex: Pearson Education.

Scottish Government (2008a) *Early Years Framework* @ <http://www.jbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The-Early-Years-Framework.pdf> (last accessed 18/10/20).

Scottish Government (2008b) *Equally Well* @ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2008/06/equally-well-report-ministerial-task-force-health-inequalities/documents/0062206-pdf/0062206-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0062206.pdf> (last accessed 17/10/20).

Scottish Government (2008c) *Achieving our Potential* @ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2008/11/achieving-potential-framework-tackle-poverty-income-inequality-scotland/documents/0069426-pdf/0069426-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0069426.pdf> (last accessed 17/10/20).

Scottish Government (2011a) *Curriculum for Excellence* @ <https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/btc5-framework.pdf> (last accessed 18/10/2020).

Scottish Government (2011b) *Consultation on Rights of Children and Young People Bill* @ <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/357438/0120726.pdf> (Last accessed 4/4/20).

Scottish Government (2013a) *Play strategy for Scotland: Our vision* @ [https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/1375/play-strategy-for-scotland\\_scottish-government.pdf](https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/1375/play-strategy-for-scotland_scottish-government.pdf) (last accessed 4/11/20).

Scottish Government (2013b) *Play strategy for Scotland: Our action plan* @ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2013/10/play-strategy-scotland-action-plan/documents/00437132-pdf/00437132-pdf/govscot%3Adocument> (last accessed 5/11/20).

Scottish Government (2013c) *UNCRC: The foundation of getting it right for every child* @ <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0041/00417256.pdf> (last accessed 28/11/19).

Scottish Government (2017a) *Health and Social Care Standards: My Support, My Life*, Edinburgh: The Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2017b) *A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland – 2017-18 Action Plan* @ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/publication/2017/03/blueprint-2020-expansion-early-learning-childcare-scotland-2017-18-action/documents/00515637-pdf/00515637-pdf/govscot%3Adocument> (Last accessed 18/10/19).

Scottish Government, Online (2018) @ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/> (last accessed 19/20/20).

Scottish Government, Online (2019) @ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-paper/2019/08/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019/documents/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019/govscot%3Adocument/out-school-care-scotland-draft-framework-2019.pdf?forceDownload=true> (last accessed 23/11/20).

Scottish Government, Online (2020) *Wellbeing Economy Alliance conference: First Minister's speech* @ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/wellbeing-economy-alliance-conference/> (last accessed 18/11/20).

Sicart, M. (2014) *Play matters*. Cambridge, MA: MIT press.

Smeyers, P. and Verhesschen, P. (2001) 'Narrative analysis as philosophical research: bridging the gap between empirical and the conceptual', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14: 1, Pp. 71-84.

Smith, A.B. (2002) 'Interpreting and supporting participation rights: Contributions from sociocultural theory', *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 10, Pp. 73-88.

Spariosu, M. I. (2015) *Modernism and exile: Play, liminality, and the exilic-utopian imagination*, Basingstoke, UK and New York, US: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sutton-Smith, B. (1997) *The ambiguity of play*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sutton-Smith, B. (2008). 'Play theory: A personal journey and new thoughts', *American Journal of Play*, 1: 1, Pp. 80-123.

Thorne, B. (2007) 'Editorial: Crafting the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies', *Childhood*, 14: 2, Pp. 147-152.

Tisdall, E.K.M. and Punch, S. (2012) 'Not so 'new'? Looking critically at childhood studies', *Children's Geographies*, 10: 3, Pp. 249-264.

Tisdall, E.K.M. (2015) 'Children's Wellbeing and Children's Rights in Tension?', *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 23, Pp. 769-789.

Tobin, G.A. and Begley, C.M. (2004) 'Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48: 4, Pp. 388-396.

Turner, V. (1969) *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*, New York: Cornell University Press.

UNICEF (United nations International Children's Emergency Fund) (Online) (1989) *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* @ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx> (last accessed 18/10/20).

UNICEF (United nations International Children's Emergency Fund) (Online) (2001) @ <https://www.unicef.org/tdad/roleofstatspublicopinion3uk.doc> (last accessed 18/10/2020).

United Nations (2015) *Sustainable Development Goals* (Online) @ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html> (last accessed 19/20/20).

University of Glasgow (School of Education Research Ethics Committee), Online @ <https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/education/research/ethics/> (last accessed 2/2/20).



Voce, A. (2015) *Policy for play: Responding to children's forgotten right*, Bristol, UK and Chicago, IL: Policy Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*, (Eds. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner and E. Suberman) Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Wyness, M. (2006) *Childhood and Society: An introduction to the sociology of childhood*, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.