

**Who Owns the Playground?**

**Space and Power at Lollard Adventure Playground (1954-1961)**

Reilly Bergin Wilson

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts by Research

The University of Leeds

School of Geography

August 2014

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

© 2014 The University of Leeds and Reilly Bergin Wilson

## Acknowledgements

The research contained in this thesis was funded through a Fulbright-University of Leeds Postgraduate Partnership Award.

This thesis would not have been possible without the unrelenting support and patience of my advisor, Dr. Robert Vanderbeck. I am also greatly indebted to my mentor, Dr. Rickie Sanders, for her endless encouragement and for generously allowing me to use her deck as my office.

I owe a huge debt to Jennifer Turner and the staff and participants at the Big Swing Adventure Playground in Bradford, who welcomed me and gave me invaluable insight into the daily rhythms of a contemporary adventure playground. Mick Conway, formerly of Play England, provided me with useful support and guidance in navigating the regulatory history of adventure playgrounds in the United Kingdom. Anna Kassman-McKerrell, the Children's Play Information Service librarian, was very helpful in navigating the Donne Buck Archives.

To Stephen Danby, Aaron Wright, Jane Wright and Jerry Danby-Wright, thank you for welcoming me into your family this past year and truly making Leeds a home for my heart. Scarlett Morse, Patrick Morse, Rory Smith, Duncan Smith, Lily Robinson, Emmy Robinson, Isaac Nisam-Sabat and Zoe Shelmet: Thank you for all the lessons I have learned with you, for your forgiveness when I thought I was right, and for endless moments of inspiration.

I would like to thank my parents, Susan Bergin and Mark Wilson, for thirty years of bravery in letting me learn from my own mistakes, for the sacrifices you made to give me an amazing education, for igniting my interest in social science research by exposing me to the moral complexity of the American child welfare and justice systems, and for the experience of living at 7462—in all its forms.

To my husband, Dr. Brendan Tuttle, I could never fully express my gratitude. Your love and support, whether from right next to me or from the other side of the world, has meant everything. Thanks for holding my hand.

## Abstract

This research aims to contribute to current debates about the reproduction of inequality through the construction of adult-implemented child-centric play environments. Using archival documents to build a case study analysis of Lollard Adventure Playground (1954-1961, hereafter 'Lollard'), it explores how the emergence of a novel children's rights discourse in post-war England was manifested spatially through one facet of the early adventure playground movement. The diverging interests and perspectives, spatial scales and particular sites from which the 'right of the child to play' emerged, reveal the contingency of this ostensibly universal object. Among other things, this thesis examines the re-construction of children as an object of knowledge, intervention and debate through the 'practical experiment' undertaken at Lollard. By examining how the practical work of constructing Lollard engaged wider debates and pre-existing social relations in the vicinity of the playground, this thesis also examines continuities, which a singular focus on the site as a 'social' experiment risks ignoring.

Table of Contents	
Acknowledgements.....	3
Abstract.....	4
Table of Contents.....	5
1. Introduction.....	7
1.1 The English adventure playground movement.....	7
1.2 Lollard Adventure Playground (1954-1961).....	7
1.3 Aims of research.....	8
1.4 Radical social experimentation in spatial form.....	8
1.5 Chapter guide.....	9
2. ‘Childhood’ and ‘children’s rights’.....	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 English working-class ‘childhood’.....	12
2.3 Constructing ‘children’ and ‘childhood’ in Geography.....	14
2.4 ‘Children’s rights’.....	15
2.5 ‘The right to play’: Links between ‘children’s rights’ and the ‘right to the city’.....	15
2.6 Conclusion.....	18
3. Adventure playgrounds.....	19
3.1 Introduction.....	19
3.2 The birth of an idea: Denmark.....	19
3.3 Early English adventure playground movement.....	20
3.4 Conclusion.....	21
4. Researching the social production and construction of a historical playground: methods and methodology.....	23
4.1 Introduction.....	23
4.2 Archival research.....	23
4.2.1 Approaches.....	24
4.2.2 Lady Allen of Hurtwood Archive.....	24
4.2.3 Donne Buck Archive.....	26
4.2.4 Refined data set.....	26
4.3 Theoretical approaches.....	27
4.3.1 Focusing on micro-scales and the mundane.....	27
4.3.2 Social production and construction of space.....	28

4.3.3 Social (re)production: relating multiple scales.....	29
4.4 Conclusion.....	30
5. Constructing Identities at Lollard.....	31
5.1 Introduction.....	31
5.2 Belonging and disrupted spatial identities.....	32
5.2.1 ‘Old Lambeth’.....	33
5.2.2 ‘THEM’.....	35
5.3 Development and social (re)production.....	38
5.3.1 Conceptions of child development, civilization and play....	38
5.3.2 Parental responsibility and social pathology discourses....	41
5.3.3 Teaching freedom: Play leader as friend, behavioural model and disciplinarian.....	45
5.4 Conclusion.....	47
6. Spatially restructuring inequality at Lollard.....	49
6.1 Introduction.....	49
6.2 (Re)constructing scenes of destruction.....	50
6.2.1 Recoding bombsites.....	50
6.2.2 Ownership identification in a time of dispossession.....	53
6.3 (Dis)order.....	54
6.3.1 Creative freedom and de(con)struction.....	55
6.3.2 Aesthetic pressures and the (mis)use of space.....	57
6.3.3 ‘Ownership’ and exclusion.....	63
6.4 The factory of the child: social (re)production.....	66
6.4.1 Productive play activities.....	67
6.4.2 Expansion.....	68
6.5 Conclusion.....	69
7. Conclusions.....	70
Archive References.....	73
References.....	77
Abbreviations.....	85

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The English adventure playground movement**

The usefulness to town children of the ‘junk’ playground, which has now been given the happier designation adventure playground, received emphatic endorsement at an informal conference held last night. (Anon., 1953)

The term ‘adventure playground’ is broadly contested (Conway, 2009b). Adventure playground has been employed to describe a range of adult-produced play environments, from playgrounds with minimal adult-built static structures and a wide range of tools and waste materials (see Ramsey, 2012) to commercialized spaces defined by elaborate climbing apparatus (see Harewood House, 2014). For their proponents in the 1950s, ‘[a]dventure playgrounds [were meant] to give children who live in densely built-up urban areas a place of their own, where they can develop their own work and play, in their own way and at their own pace, and where they can find the tools and materials to use for their own purpose’ (Allen and Wilson, 1957, p.11). Themes of autonomy, choice and child-ownership (‘a place of their own’) run through positive descriptions of adventure playgrounds. For critics, on the other hand, the phrase was a euphemism for ‘old cars placed there only to be smashed to pieces with the aid of hammers, children allowed to light fires to the annoyance of people living opposite’ (MSS.121/AP/10/2).

### **1.2 Lollard Adventure Playground (1954-1961)**

Lollard was not the first space to be founded as a ‘social experiment’ within the adventure playground ethos in England; however, it represents an initial attempt to produce an organizational model that might serve as a rubric for an ultimate expansion of that ethos in practice. While previous adventure playgrounds, such as those at Clydesdale and Camberwell, had already existed as self-contained projects (see Allen and Nicholson, 1975; Kozlovsky, 2013; Cranwell, 2003), Lollard was explicitly founded as a ‘experimental’ project (MSS.121/AP/3/5/10). The founder members of Lollard aimed to simultaneously produce a radical space (a loosely defined ‘adventure playground’), construct an effective organizational model for future adventure playgrounds, and expand

awareness and support for a broader adventure playground movement (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1).

### **1.3 Aims of research**

This research aims to contribute to current debates about the reproduction of inequality through the construction of adult-implemented child-centric play environments. Using archival documents to build a case study analysis of Lollard Adventure Playground (1954-1961, hereafter ‘Lollard’), it explores how the emergence of a novel children’s rights discourse in post-war England was manifested spatially through the early adventure playground movement. What emerges from the archival documents is a picture of spatial control—not only of the physical shaping of space but also the activities performed within it—that effectively reproduced pre-existing inequalities of age and class. An overarching conflict existed between the playground’s position as a promotional product—for the argument that adult society should compensate children for the loss of spatial autonomy caused by urbanization—and its role as a location where children might appropriate space for creative endeavours. The varied ways in which this conflict emerged reveals fault lines along which universalizing human rights discourses—and children’s rights discourses in particular—fail to reconcile the divergent interests of rights promoters and rights recipients.

### **1.4 Radical social experimentation in spatial form**

One of the ventures which received the [Nuffield] Foundation’s support was that of the Grimbsy Adventure Playground Association. A group of local people collected money, junk, and building material and a playground – it became known as ‘Shanty Town’ – was established on a site at a peppercorn rent. Large numbers of children used the ground and their ‘dens’ gradually developed into a ‘community’ with its own hospital, fire department, police station, and hotel. (Anon., 1957, p.13)

Early adventure playgrounds in England – as elsewhere – represented a deliberate and, to many, radical social experimentation in spatial form. Such spaces have been claimed as examples of both ‘a parable of anarchy’ (Ward, 1961) and ‘a strategy of power’ (Kozlovsky, 2008). The social value of children’s play had been a topic of public concern for decades by the time the first adventure playgrounds opened. Adventure playgrounds provided this public



concern with a site for the ‘advancement of social well-being by research and practical experiment’, in the phrase of the Nuffield Foundation (2002). Among other things, this thesis examines the re-construction of children as an object of knowledge, intervention and debate through the ‘practical experiment’ undertaken at Lollard. By examining how the practical work of constructing Lollard engaged wider debates and pre-existing social relations in the vicinity of the playground, this thesis also examines continuities, which a singular focus on the site as a ‘social’ experiment risks ignoring.

Like children’s play and play sites, childcare, likewise, provides a locus for anxieties about physical and social boundaries, class and racial distinctions, ‘us’ and ‘them’. Indeed, the first English adventure playgrounds were all constructed in heavily populated working class neighbourhoods in urban areas. Several sites were purposefully selected for their geographic position – whether situated within pre-existing local social-service networks (Rathbone Street) or within close proximity to government observation (Lollard). These spatial relations gave the sites value as exploratory ventures, which could be easily monitored, as well as sites of social regulation.

The original goal of building playgrounds such as Lollard was to provide a space where children could ‘be masters of the materials to hand and be free to move them around to suit their own desires and to create their own order out of seeming chaos’ (Allen, 1972, p.8). Adventure playgrounds took shape within a post-war England, alongside Fluxus and Pop Art – art forms that challenged conceptions about the manufactured environment—and William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954) – a story which held out children as emblems of ‘human nature’ – at a time when ideas about the re-use of made objects and the ‘rights’ of children were very much matters of larger debate. Indeed, adventure playgrounds incorporated many elements of this larger conversation about human nature and human artifacts, which is part of the reason why adventure playgrounds reflect the ironies of these wider conversations. Spaces designated as adventure playgrounds, especially, conceptually and materially embody contradictory attitudes toward children and anxieties about their development and safety. Adventure playgrounds, then, are an interesting site upon which to examine these contradictions and dilemmas, which adult-led movements around play make visible.

## 1.5 Chapter guide

Chapter 2 focuses on ‘childhood’ and ‘children’s rights’ as social constructions. This chapter opens with an introduction to these concepts (2.1) and then examines more specifically conceptions of working-class childhood in England in the nineteenth and early- to mid- twentieth centuries (2.2). Next, recent constructions of children and childhood in the field of Geography are discussed (2.3), followed by ideas about children’s rights and the growth of a children’s rights movement (2.4). Finally, theories about play are discussed in the context of the ‘right to play’ (2.5).

Chapter 3 provides a brief historical background of the English adventure playground movement. This chapter first discusses the original conception of ‘junk’ playgrounds in Denmark in the 1930s – the idea that served as the basis for the later English ‘adventure playground’ (3.2). Then I look at the early adventure playground movement that began in England in the late 1940s (3.3).

Chapter 4 presents the methods and methodologies relied on in this thesis. The archival research conducted as part of this project is discussed (4.2), including a review of theoretical approaches to archival research (4.2.1), background information and an explanation of examined documents for the two archives consulted – the Lady Allen of Hurtwood Papers (4.2.2) and the Donne Buck Collection (4.2.3) –, and the refined dataset (4.2.4) used in the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6. It then turns to a discussion of theoretical approaches employed in the analysis (4.3), including a focus on the micro-scale and mundane material practices (4.3.1), the social production and construction of space (4.3.2), and social reproduction (4.3.3).

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of social construction at Lollard through a focus on how various stakeholder groups conceived of each other and points to ways in which these contested constructions influenced the production of the playground. This chapter begins by looking at the founding of Lollard (5.1). Next, conceptions of belonging and spatial identification are discussed (5.2), in terms of identifications of ‘us’ (5.2.1) and ‘them’ (5.2.2). The chapter then turns to social reproduction at Lollard (5.3) through examination of constructed ideals regarding children (5.3.1), parents (5.3.2), and play leaders (5.3.3).

Chapter 6 examines how inequality was materially and spatially constructed at Lollard. Ways in which the project of Lollard (re)constructed scenes of destruction are discussed (6.2) in terms of the playground's role in 'recoding' bomb damage (Highmore, 2013) (6.2.1) amid dislocation linked to urban renewal schemes (6.2.2). Then, concepts of (dis)order (Douglas, 1966; Kraftl, 2013) are examined (6.3) through the lenses of de(con)struction (6.3.1), (mis)use of space (6.3.2) and informal ownership and exclusivity (6.3.3). Finally, social (re)production and the alienated right to play (6.4) is examined through a focus on 'productive' play activities (6.5) and physical expansion of the adventure playground movement (6.4.2).

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions drawn from this research, including implications and future directions.

## **2. ‘CHILDHOOD’ AND ‘CHILDREN’S RIGHTS’**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I examine the social construction of childhood, as well as notions of children’s rights as they relate to space. The term ‘child’ is an arbitrary classification, applied to a range of ages from birth onwards (see Valentine, 1996). Understanding that any determination of age boundaries is problematic, it is mainly for convenience that in this thesis I use ‘children’ to refer to people eighteen years and under. This is how the term was employed by the Executive Committee at Lollard (MSS.121/AP/1/1/40).

In the next section, I provide a brief historical contextualization of the construction of English working-class childhood. In order to present a fuller picture of how idea(l)s about children (Kraftl, 2006) were constructed in mid-twentieth century England, I trace the dominant conceptions of childhood from the nineteenth century onward. Afterward, I discuss ways in which children and childhood are theorized in the sub-field of Children’s Geographies. Then, I turn to a discussion of the children’s rights movement. Finally, I discuss the concept of the right to play, as codified in 1959 U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child (CRC, 2013). I argue that the right to play represents a link between concepts of children’s rights and the right to the city.

### **2.2 English working-class ‘childhood’**

Conceptions of the ‘child’ and ‘childhood’ have varied in England—like elsewhere (Levine, 2007)—over time (Valentine, 1996). Dominant conceptions in England over the past two centuries have largely hinged on what Valentine (1996, p. 581) refers to as ‘the moral landscape of childhood’. According to Hendrick (1997, p.38), attitudes about child labour shifted at the end of the eighteenth century from it being a positive instrument of discipline and moral education to an oppressive force that victimized children, producing a conception of childhood as a ‘distinct set of characteristics requiring protection and fostering through school education’. (Prout, 2005) asserts that this shifting conception of childhood coincided with technological advancements in manufacturing that blunted the demand for child labour. The removal of children from the labour

force and the establishment of compulsory schooling coincided with an evangelical movement to 'save' children from what reformers saw as the immoral influences of 'the street' (Prout, 2005, p.35; see also Henrick, 1997). The ambiguous meaning of childhood present in the nineteenth century had solidified by the start of World War I, Hendrick (1997, p.34) argues, into a 'modern conception' that 'was legally, legislatively, socially, medically, psychologically, educationally and politically institutionalized'.

The relationship of the state to children was transformed during World War II through the welfare apparatus that developed around the evacuation of urban children into the countryside. Towards the end of the war and in the succeeding years several Acts of Parliament were aimed directly at the welfare of children. The 1944 Education Act, the 1946 Family Allowances Act and the 1948 Children Act collectively recognized the responsibility of the government for protecting children, thereby maintaining childhood as a distinct category of social dependence (Cunningham, 2006).

A parallel re-construction of childhood related to the participation of children in the labour force took place in other professional domains. Rosen (2005, p.8), for example, has written (of Britain) about how, 'to the extent that military life was understood to be virtuous and ennobling, there was little conflict between the idea of the child and the life of the soldier'. Like child-labour, child-military service could be seen as a positive instrument of discipline and moral education. Indeed, up until World War II, Rosen (2005) notes, the British army relied on army apprenticeships to develop its skilled labour force.

As European and American armies later began to restrict the recruitment of children – defined first as younger than fifteen, later as younger than eighteen – the participation of *children* younger than eighteen in armed conflicts elsewhere in the world was increasingly held out as evidence of moral backwardness and social crisis (Rosen, 2007). However, even as universalizing conceptions of childhood became globalized – traveling through UN conventions and humanitarian 'narratives [of child victims in conflict, which tended to] amplify the helplessness of children' (Rosen, 2007, p. 299) – the idea that military discipline provided a promising way to develop *citizenship* and *responsibility* among children was reinforced in Britain. Mills (2013a, p.124) describes how the Scout Movement in Britain, which had emerged from anxieties

about ‘the physical weakness of the British Army’ and the ‘the possible decline of Britain’s imperial power’, was aimed at developing ‘better citizens’. Mills (2013a) asserts that the Scout Movement naturalizes conceptions of childhood and of the child as a ‘future adult’, a citizen-in-miniature, and an object of public concern.

### **2.3 Constructing ‘children’ and ‘childhood’ in the field of Geography**

The subfield of Children’s Geographies that emerged in the past two decades has been predominantly concerned with producing evidence of agency among young people. This concern is partly a result of Children’s Geographies having emerged out of a dominant field – Human Geography – that had previously treated children as passive and peripheral objects rather than agentic and substantive actors. In the past decade, some Children’s Geographers have begun to challenge this dominant paradigm. Children play concrete social roles beyond simply receiving adult care (or abuse) and waiting around for adulthood. Scholars have questioned whether the privileging of agency has obscured the role played by dominant economic and social power structures, which shape children’s lives (Vanderbeck, 2008). While the conception of children as *being* rather than *becoming* remains an important theoretical construct, the oversimplification risked by treating children wholly as *becoming* runs the danger of ignoring the very real challenges and inequalities that children face in adult-oriented socio-political landscapes. As Aitken (2001) argues,

childhood as it is currently constituted is a construct within which the otherness and peculiarity of children are rendered safe and manageable for programmatic research and instrumental notions of justice. What I mean by this is that childhood is an adult abstraction suggesting a state of being, whereas the study of children is really the study of a group of persons based on a search for the voice of those persons. But there is no authentic or just voice for childhood because the adult world dominates that of the child. (Aitken, 2001, p. 119-120)

The complexity that Aitken depicts often drops out of the narratives produced by administrative bodies concerned with childhood because *children* are commonly defined bureaucratically as a group of people classified by age and treated as a monolithic category for the ease of administrative procedures. What ‘matters’ to children is often lost in policy discourse (Horton and Kraftl, 2009). This tendency to simplify children’s points of view is often ignored in – and even produced by –

the discourse concerning the United Nations (UN) Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

#### **2.4 ‘Children’s Rights’**

According to Gadda (2008), the children’s rights movement that materialized in the mid-1800s fundamentally differed from other rights movements of the time in that its organizers were predominantly not members of the ‘oppressed’ group in question – children. Instead, it was a movement composed and led by concerned adults who were, in turn, guided by a relatively recent moralistic conception of childhood innocence, which they helped to extend. Moreover, Vanderbeck points to ‘tensions within children’s rights discourses between visions of children as objects of rights (recipients of rights/protections from adults) and subjects of rights (agents capable of independently exercising rights)’ (2008, p.396).

The children’s rights movement eventually led to a succession of League of Nations and UN interventions, beginning with the 1924 Declaration of Children’s Rights (DCR). The 1959 Declaration on the Rights of the Child (DRC), and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reaffirmed and developed the ‘rights of children’ and the ‘responsibilities of adults’. Gadda notes the “ironic” contradiction that Article 12 of the CRC embodies; it enshrines children’s rights to participation even though it was drafted without any input from children (2008, p. 8). In a review of efforts by signatory countries to the CRC, Bartlett (2005) points to a dearth of concrete policy developments that are directly concerned with the situation or participation of children. Instead, Bartlett notes, the primary actions undertaken by the CRC were “statements of commitment [that were] more about vision than about the regulatory nuts and bolts of implementation” (2005, p. 20).

#### **2.5 ‘The Right to Play’: Links Between ‘Children’s Rights’ and ‘The Right to the City’**

Theories about *play* – how it is constituted and what motivates it – are intricately linked to discourses about children’s rights. Play has been theorized in biological terms as necessary for physical, emotional, social and mental development (see Frost, 2010; Lester and Russell, 2010; Graeber, 2014), in

critical terms as a mode of critique and commentary on adult activity (Argenti, 2001), and in humanistic terms as freely chosen pleasurable activity that has a *civilizing* function (see Huizinga, 1949). The 1959 U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child institutionalized the universal *right of the child to play* as the responsibility of nation states. Article 31 of the 1989 U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child reinforced that right: ‘States Parties recognize the *right* of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities *appropriate to the age of the child* and to participate *freely* in cultural life and the arts’ (CRC, 2013, p.3, emphasis added).

More recently, the 2013 General Comment No. 17 (G. C. No. 17) – drafted in reflection of Article 31 – specifically identifies free play as an integral part of these rights and chastises signatories for collectively failing to enable access to such opportunities: ‘equally important [to the provision of structured and organized activities] is the need to create time and space for children to engage in spontaneous play, recreation and creativity, and to promote societal attitudes that support and encourage such activity’ (CRC, 2013, p.3). While G. C. No. 17 affirms the positive role that adults can inhabit within children’s play, it cautions that adult involvement becomes detrimental ‘if control by adults is so pervasive that it undermines the child’s own efforts to organize and conduct his or her play activities’ (CRC, 2013, pp.4-5).

The right to play that is enshrined in these various UN documents, is not unproblematic. Often present in discourses regarding play is a false dichotomy between play for its own sake and play that is enskilling. Instead, Aitken & Herman (2010, p.69) propose an understanding of play as ‘a state of being which counters rationality by refusing to settle on specific values, meanings and subjectivities, opting instead for fluidity, discourse and multiple positions’. Katz (2004, p.61), meanwhile, suggests a theory of play as an enigmatic means of social production and social reproduction, what she terms ‘playful work and workful play’. Graeber (2014, p.2) takes this argument further to a discussion about animal play; he notes that the false dichotomy between play for its own sake and play that is ‘directed towards some goal’, whether it be to promote health, for example, or pro-social skills, emerged from the authority possessed by a particular style of crude economic argument, ‘where to be scientific means to offer an explanation of behaviour in rational terms’.



Bengtsson (1974, p.7), in *The Child's Right to Play*, exhorts adults 'to give [children] their 'Right to Play'', labelling play 'the birthright of every child'. Indeed, the theoretical contradiction of *rights* being simultaneously inherent and endowed runs throughout Bengtsson's work. Likewise, the structuring of children as *becoming* – apprentices for a future social role – is central to Bengtsson's (1974, p.7) argument that protection of children's *right to play* is a social necessity: 'Through play [the child] acquires most of the experiences and skills required by those who care for him and by the society he gradually grows into'. Under this conception of play it is the social and generative aspects of play – enskilling as a means of social reproduction – that are most vital, noting that 'for richness and depth in children's play, nothing is more important than contact with adults and their activities' (Bengtsson, 1974, p.17).

Children's use value of space has been linked to their ability to creatively manipulate the existing environment (Beunderman et al., 2007). Nicholson's (1971, p.30) 'theory of loose parts' connects the opportunity for originality to the 'number and kind of variables' accessible within an environment. Divergent play – meaning play situations that allow for open-ended outcomes or a creative application of materials – has been found to better supply children with an environment within which to generate problem solving skills than convergent play, meaning play that is single-outcome and defined by structural constraints (Frost, 1992). Frost (1992, p.38) points to 'an empirical relationship between unstructured play and subsequently enhanced associative fluency,' by which he means innovative problem solving.

According to Lester and Russell (2010, p.18), play 'marks an act of agency, often in concert with other children, to shape their own worlds and destinies'. They argue that in social play, children establish conventions that allow for the integration of independent schema (Lester and Russell, 2010). This is to say that children quite literally create society and culture as they interact with one another, rather than simply learn how to create for some future time. Doll and Lefavre (2007) suggest that through the temporary appropriation of public space, children begin to understand their potential for collective agency – what Harvey (2008, p.23), theorizing the *right to the city*, calls "[t]he freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves" – and that appropriation can take the

form of manipulation of space in ways that represent the individualism of the current inhabitants.

Part of the impetus behind the adventure playground movement in England was the idea that adult society should compensate children for the erosion of their right to play caused by urbanization (see Allen and Nicholson, 1975). Designed structural permanence can be seen as a form of civic deskilling. Hart (1997) posits that children's civic identities can only form through participatory practice – as opposed to autocratic dictation (Hart, 1992). Likewise, Scott (2012) argues that by placing restrictions on children's ability to creatively alter public space, adults diminish their opportunities for taking part in collective projects and reflecting on collective agency.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This section sketched out two parallel constructions of childhood as an object of knowledge and policy: the first taking place within a wider discussion of *rights*, the second in the field of Children's Geographies. The social construction of childhood as an object of knowledge cannot be separated from concrete places, practices and social ties. This thesis examines the diverging interests and perspectives, spatial scales and particular sites from which the right of the child to play emerged, revealing the contingency of this ostensibly universal object. By doing so, this thesis examines the construction of children's rights at Lollard, where children were simultaneously figured as objects of protection (discipline and nurture), as future adults, and as bearers of rights and projects of cooperative self-creation. This multiplicity gave childhood purchase, linking concrete sites (such as Lollard) to utopian hopes and aspirations (Kraftl, 2009). Before turning to Lollard specifically, it would be helpful to take a step back and situate the site within a larger genealogy of adventure playgrounds, the subject of the next chapter.

### 3. ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS

#### 3.1 Introduction

As I noted earlier (see 1.1), the meaning and application of the term adventure playground has evolved over time. In the interest of clarity, I use the term – much as it was originally intended when it was coined in the 1950s as an alternative to the earlier term junk playground (see Cranwell, 2003; Benjamin, 1961) – to denote a child-centric space, primarily produced by adults, with materials and tools for building, digging, and experimenting with fire. This chapter aims to provide a brief orientation with the early history of adventure playgrounds.

#### 3.2 The birth of an idea: Denmark

The initial theorization of junk playgrounds is credited to C. T. Sørensen, a Danish landscape architect, who suggested ‘waste material playgrounds in suitable large areas where children would be able to play with old cars, boxes, and timber’ in his 1931 book *Park Politics for Town and Country* (Cranwell, 2003, p.17). Sorenson related his own observations of children’s preference for playing in empty building sites rather than designed playgrounds. Extrapolating from these observations, Sorenson suggests a play environment devoid of pre-fabricated climbing equipment, in which children are provided with tools, raw materials, and reclaimed objects, for which he supplied the term ‘junk playground’ (Norman, 2005). Twelve years later, Sørensen’s vision was concretized at Emdrupvej, Denmark, during the German occupation. Reflecting in 1951 on his role in the establishment of adventure playgrounds, Sørensen wrote that ‘[o]f all the things I have helped to realize, the junk playground is the ugliest: yet for me it is the best and most beautiful of my works’ (Benjamin, 1961, p.11, quoting Sorensen, 1951).

The ‘junk’ playground at Emdrupvej (hereafter Emdrup), initially run by John Bertelsen, was instigated by the Workers’ Cooperative Housing Association (Bengtsson, 1972). Initially, Bertelsen, a former sailor and kindergarten teacher (Frost, 2010), received a large plot of land – surrounded by a high embankment with a fence on top – and a pile of scrap materials and tools to work with in relative autonomy from oversight. However, by 1945 the Housing Association

began to pressure Bertelsen to incorporate organized activities in the playground. According to an excerpt from his diary from that time, Bertelsen resisted this pressure, asserting that the adults involved should concentrate on acquiring scrap materials in order to maintain the original goal of ‘a playground where the children are themselves the creators’ (Bertelsen, 1972, p.20). Two years later Bertelsen resigned, noting in his diary ‘the conditions necessary for any further development of the work were, in my opinion, not present. That last thing in which I participated was the demolition of the 20 m high tower—the symbol of the children’s sky-high dreams and creative joy’ (Bertelsen, 1972, excerpted from 1947 diary, p.22).

### **3.3 Early English adventure playground movement**

In 1946, while Bertelsen was still play leader at Emdrup, landscape architect and social campaigner Lady Allen visited and subsequently wrote an article about the playground – ‘Why Not Use Our Bomb Sites Like This?’ – that was published in *Picture Post* (MSS.121/AP/7/2/22: Allen, 1946). Although Lady Allen’s article is consistently credited with introducing into the U.K. the idea of installing ‘junk’ playgrounds on former bomb sites as a method of reworking violent tendencies in children, Marie Paneth, an art therapist heavily influenced by Freud, independently developed the concept of permissive play as a tool for ameliorating childhood aggression in her work running a blitz-era play centre in London (Kozlovsky, 2009, p.207). Nonetheless, Allen had a considerable effect on the establishment of adventure playgrounds in England. Mentioned in nearly every published book and website about adventure playgrounds in England, Allen demonstrated an ability to utilize her privileged social position for awareness and funding. Married to Lord Clifford Allen, a prominent socialist strategist and conscientious objector who was given his title by J. R. MacDonald, Lady Allen had social access to individuals with money and political influence (Allen and Nicholson, 1975).

In 1948, the Ministry of Education released a report on ‘out of school’ provisions for children that decried the lack of access to recreational facilities. Included in that report as an appendix was a reprint of Allen’s *Picture Post* article depicting Emdrup. The article argues that ‘waste material playground[s]’

such as Emdrup provide an environment in which children can learn responsibility through self-management (MOE, 1948, p.27).

The U.K.'s first publicly accessible junk playground was opened in Camberwell, London, in 1948 (Cranwell, 2003), followed in 1951 by Clydesdale Playground, located in Kensington, London. In 1952, the NPFA awarded exploratory grants to two proposed junk playgrounds, Lollard Street and Rathbone Street, in Liverpool (NPFA, 1960).

In *Adventure in Play: The story of the Rathbone Street Adventure Playground*, John Barron Mays (1957, p.5), the warden of the Liverpool University Settlement, describes the 'Adventure Playground' as a 'hybrid of the strip-cartoon and the junk yard' where children can engage in 'voyages and destinations through a world of healthy dreams'. Although Mays (1957, p.5) settles on the term 'adventure playground' as a primary descriptor, he points to the various terms in use: 'adventure, junk or constructional playgrounds – call them what you will'.

By 1953, the concept of 'junk' playgrounds had gained enough prominence within recreational discourse that an exploratory meeting on the subject was called by the NPFA (Cranwell, 2003, p. 19). Cranwell (2003, p.19) links the initial use of the term 'adventure playground' to this period, giving credit to Sir George Pepler and Lady Allen for coining it in an effort to make the 'junk' playground concept more palatable to local authorities. Meanwhile, Benjamin (1961) cites an address given at the NPFA meeting by a Birmingham local education authority representative as a prior use of the term (p. 24). Regardless of who actually introduced the term *adventure playground* into the discourse, its broadening use by 1954 and corresponding attempts at solidifying a definition marks the beginning of a broad intra-movement dialogue rooted in contested conceptions of autonomous public play environments (see Play England, 2011).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The original idea behind the adventure playground was conceived in Denmark in the 1930s, introduced to England in the 1940s, and made a physical reality in the 1950s. The concept of producing a space specifically for children, where they might manipulate raw materials and physically create their own

community, was certainly radical in mid-century England. Having provided some historical contextualization of the adventure playground movement which birthed Lollard, and of which Lollard would become an integral part, I turn in the next chapter to a discussion of the theories and methods that I utilized in producing the analysis presented in chapters five and six.

## **4. RESEARCHING THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION OF A HISTORICAL PLAYGROUND: METHODS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I explain how I approached the collection and analysis of the dataset that I used for this thesis. I begin by discussing my archival research. First, I identify the archives I used and how I located them (4.2). Next, I discuss the methodological approaches that informed my understanding of archival research (4.2.1). Then, I discuss the archives in detail, including how each archive was constructed (4.2.2 and 4.2.3). Finally, I explain how I refined my final dataset.

After discussing the collection of data from the archives, I turn to a discussion of the theoretical approaches that I draw on in the thematic content analysis that I present in the following chapters (4.3): focusing on micro-scales and the mundane (4.3.1), social production and construction of space (4.3.2), and social (re)production (4.3.3).

### **4.2 Archival Research**

I examined materials from two archives: the Donne Buck Collection, located in London at the National Children's Bureau's (NCB) Children's Play Information Service (CPIS), and the Lady Allen of Hurtwood Papers, located at the University of Warwick's Modern Records Centre. It is important to note that each archive was primarily constructed by its respective namesake, and the documents included (as well as excluded) reflect personal valuations of historical legacy. Both of these archives came to my attention through the CPIS website. I spent a total of two weeks in the Donne Buck archive and one week in the Lady Allen of Hurtwood archive. During that time I photographed approximately half of the document in the Donne Buck archive and almost all of the documents in the Adventure Playground section of the Lady Allen of Hurtwood archive.

#### 4.2.1 Approaches

Working with archival documents demands attention to how the documents, themselves, have been produced and organized as material and narrative artefacts. As Black (2010, p.467) asserts, historical narratives based on archival sources are constructed at multiple levels: (1) the initial decisions taken in the recording of the information, (2) the choice of what recorded information will be preserved in the archive, (3) the prerogative of the holding institution in regard to the organization and accessibility of the archive materials, and (4) the “process of retrieval, selection, contextualization and ascription of meaning” employed by the individual researcher.

Stoler (2009, p.20) encourages us to view archived institutional records as ‘transparencies on which power relations were inscribed’. Archives are not only multilayered ‘accounts of actions or records of what people thought happened’ (Stoler, 2009, p.9), they are also part of a multilayered ‘technology of rule’ (p.20) organized by the often unstated *common sense* governing what issues were considered important and ‘how those issues traveled by paper through the bureaucratic pathways of the [...] administration’ (p.9). The deceptive transparency of *common sense* can render archives inaccessible to those reading them in places separated by time and space from their authors.

In ‘Cultural-Historical Geographies of the Archive: Fragments, Objects and Ghosts’, Mills (2013b) examines the other ways in which archives act, using another transparency, a ghost, to underline the ways in which researchers must *reanimate* often fragmentary and disorganized archival materials. After all, archives are not simply residues of the past. Archives are put to work by historians, who, by bringing them into an active relationship with the present, *resurrect* them. Mills’ use of gothic language to describe banal features of the archive (torn pages, dusty folders) is not accidental. ‘One of our tasks as researchers then is to locate these [archival] ghosts and try to re-create their lives from the archival record’, Mills (2013b, p.707) argues; ‘[t]his is usually determined by [...] practices of collecting [...] and the wider politics of the archive: What will it save or destroy? Whose stories will it keep? Who decides?’. Archival work, like Dr. Frankenstein, produces composite and re-animated lives.



#### 4.2.2 *Lady Allen of Hurtwood Archive*

Lady Marjorie Allen of Hurtwood (ne. Gill; b.1897, d.1976) was a prominent social campaigner for children's welfare (Kozlovsky, 2008), focusing on policy development and international organization – which Allen saw as crucial avenues to global peace and the rejection of Fascism (see Allen and Nicholson, 1975). She co-founded the World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP) in the late 1940s – an international NGO that was influential in the production of the 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child and national level children's rights education (Curtis, 2008). Allen is often memorialized as the dominant force of the English adventure playground movement (Kozlovsky, 2008; see also Cranwell, 2003). Although many people with individualized motivations participated in the implementation of adventure playgrounds in England (for examples see NPFA, 1960), Allen was in a unique position to garner economic and political support for their advancement, and her individual experiences shaped the wider social discourse on adventure playgrounds. Through a sustained publicity blitz that reinforced published letters with public speeches, Allen awakened and then harnessed the power of public opinion for shaping political action. The discourses Allen employed in her social campaigning—including the naturalistic shaping of the built environment to meet social needs, delinquency as a result of social and spatial deprivation, and the advancement of universal well-being through international institution building (see Allen and Nicholson, 1975)—shaped the construction of the early English adventure playground movement on a broad scale, and in turn shaped the production of individual playgrounds such as Lollard.

The papers of Lady Allen were catalogued for the Modern Records Centre by Richard Story in 1984 and 1994. The papers were procured in two batches, the majority of the collection having been purchased before Lady Allen's death in 1976 with the remainder being 'transferred to the Centre by their daughter' in 1994 (Archives Hub, 2009). I examined only the records relating to Adventure Playgrounds (MSS.121/AP). A limitation of this collection is that some of the documents are undated, and a personal frustration developed with the multitude of carbon copy documents.

#### *4.2.3 Donne Buck Archive*

Donne Buck (b.1934), a former Lollard play worker and active member of the third sector play policy movement, donated a collection of relevant documents to the CPIS in 2007, which were catalogued by archivist Celia Pilkington. The collection is comprised of sixteen boxes of documents dating from 1957 onward, including correspondence, meeting notes, pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles, conference notes, and pictures (CPIS, 2009). I photographed, and later reviewed, the documents contained in three boxes: (9) Articles and Reports, (10) Pamphlets, (15) Adventure Playgrounds throughout England and Scotland. Unfortunately, presumably due to funding constraints, the collection is disordered – with some files missing from boxes and documents not clearly labeled. Major limitations of the Donne Buck Collection include a large quantity of undated documents, poor handwriting within correspondence, and visually fuzzy carbon copy documents.

#### *4.2.4 Refined Data Set*

In total, I examined approximately 1500 documents, ranging from the 1940s to the 1980s. My initial search criteria were very broad, limited only by time (since I had to travel to the archives in London and Warwick), and encompassed anything relating to the production of adventure playgrounds. As the two archives contained such a large volume of materials relating to adventure playgrounds, I chose to refine my data set (the documents that I would analyse in depth).

I chose to focus on Lollard Street Adventure Playground in its initial location – at the intersection of Lollard Street and Lambeth Walk in South London, from 1954-1961 – because of the quality of available records specific to that space at that time. The extensive documentation of Lollard Adventure Playground – from the initial attempts to organize a playground in 1954 until its closure in 1961 – includes the entirety of the Lollard Adventure Playground Association Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, the Association's constitution, photographs, a publicity pamphlet produced by the Executive Committee, the Association's Annual Reports, two editions of a magazine produced by children who attended Lollard, published memoirs written by two

separate play workers – Joe Benjamin and H. S. Turner – and by the Executive Committee Chairman – Lady Allen, personal correspondence of Lady Allen – and an assistant play worker – Donne Buck – , an historical memory blog contributed to by several former child residents of the surrounding area – *Jimmy's Lambeth* – , as well as hundreds of newspaper, magazine and television features. Furthermore, Lollard itself represents a self-conscious effort on the part of its initial organizers to provide a space in which children could produce their own environment in an attempt to reproduce an idealized pre-war and pre-urban society. Situated within contemporary political, economic, and social structures it becomes possible to examine the relationship of the specific material practices present at the playground to the web of power relationships among the people involved.

### **4.3 Theoretical Approaches**

In analysing the dataset that I assembled from the archives, I drew on a range of different, although inter-related theoretical approaches in order to process the themes that emerged within my reading of the texts. After reading through the dataset a first time in an attempt to gain some footing in terms of the documented history of Lollard Street Adventure Playground, I returned to the texts searching specifically for evidence of contested narratives surrounding the recorded stakeholders' interactions with the playground. In analysing the texts as a body of information, I drew on theories regarding hyper-local and everyday material practices, social production and construction of space, and the linking of economic- and child-development in social production and reproduction.

#### *4.3.1 Focusing on micro-scales and the mundane*

Krafft (2006, p. 490) points to the need for site-specific studies of 'constructions of idea(l)s such as childhood' in order to contextualize broader theorizations. As Krafft asserts, 'Very little research has focused on just one practice, institution or building, to really understand what is going on *there*' (2006, p. 490, emphasis in original).

Geographers have underlined the importance of questions of scale: how localized practices – emotional landscapes, ways of doing things and relating to others – relate to larger patterns and social forces (see Krafft, 2006; Valentine,

2000). Indeed, Horton and Kraftl (2009, p.2995) have shown how everyday matters (snippets of advice, styles of meeting people, sharing coffee, notions of what constitutes a ‘normal family’ or a ‘healthy bond’ with a child) are the materials out of which much larger scale social projects are made.

#### 4.3.2 *Social production and construction of space*

To understand how everyday practices are shaped by space, I lean heavily on the methodology for spatialising culture developed by Low (1996, 2001). In her ethnographic work on Costa Rican public plazas, Low employs the dual concepts of social production of space and social construction of space to examine the multiple evolving forces that contribute to the formation of the physical environment and the meaning vested in that environment by the people who interact with it. Building on the theory of production of space developed by Lefebvre (1991), Low presents a theoretical framework in which the social production of space interacts with the social construction of space in “a dialogical process in which there is a high degree of conflict and contestation” (Low, 2000, pgs. 36-37). According to Low, *social production of space* “includes all those factors – social, economic, ideological, and technological – that result, or seek to result, in the physical creation of the material setting” while *social construction of space* “is the actual transformation of space – through peoples’ social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting – into scenes and actions that convey meaning” (Low, 2000, pgs. 127-128).

Mitchell (1996) stresses the importance of recognizing the contested processes that produce landscapes in order to peel away the veneer of permanence and inevitability that develops around them and reinforces the narrative dominance of elite interests (1994). Likewise, Gruenewald (2003) underlines the importance of attention to the political and ideological dimensions of place making. Inattention to the unequal relations through which people construct place risks making spatial patterns of inequality seem ‘natural and inevitable,’ and the danger is not always avoided. “[W]hen we accept the existence of places as unproblematic ... we also become complicit in the political processes, however problematic, that stewarded these places into being and that continue to legitimize them” (Gruenewald, 2003, 627). Space is a product of human social activity and reproduces social relationships. It is our “often-

unconscious” day-to-day experience of place that makes it ideologically useful, not least for the capacity of ordinary spatial involvement to conceal and justify inequalities (Gruenewald, 2003, 629).

#### *4.3.3 Social (re)production: relating multiple scales*

The contested processes that produce landscapes work across a number of intertwined spatial and social scales. Over a series of articles, Katz (2001a; 2001b) has used the phrase ‘scale-jumping’ to describe ways in which the global is linked to people’s most intimate experiences. Katz asks how, for instance, changes linked to a global economy – changes such as a reduction in worker stability or public money available for public sewage treatment and environmental protection – ‘jump’ from very large-scale processes of neoliberal restructuring to children’s bodies and parent’s intimate concerns about nannies or children’s exposure to lead and television. Mapping these interrelated scales across environmental and emotional landscapes can illustrate how different aspects of social production are interconnected.

What Katz suggests (2004) is that scholars focusing on ‘economic development’ have tended to discuss production mainly in those settings where adults farm or produce things for exchange. Starting from settings in which children grow up on the other hand would mean examining processes of social production in ways that are much more broadly but, often, usefully defined. For Katz (2004), the pairing of economic development and child development highlights the interconnectedness of children’s daily lives and larger patterns of socio-political transformation, as well as the position of children as actors in the process of social and political change or stasis. Gagen (2007, p.16), meanwhile, links the American foreign policy of playground building in the early twentieth century to the contemporaneous development of the academic discipline of psychology and its application in the United States to concerns about the “‘normal’ development’ of children and its impacts on ‘the progress of [American] civilization’”. Gagen (2007, p.15) argues that ‘theories of child development interpenetrated with notions of foreign underdevelopment and not only informed imperial projects but also informed America’s thinking about itself’, shaping playgrounds, ideas about childhood, and children themselves in the process.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

This thesis deals with Lollard's history as it unfolded – to me – in the Donne Buck Collections, the Lady Allen of Hurtwood Papers, and other written sources. In this chapter, Stoler's warning about the deceptive transparency of *common sense* is particularly apt; not only are these written sources distant in time, but the deceptive transparency of the idea of *childhood* tends to efface this distance. Reading 'along the archival grain', Stoler (2009, p.53) draws our attention to history's 'granular rather than seamless texture', heterogeneous social forces that, through their friction, generate deceptively universal categories. In the next chapter I examine these frictions, as well as how more diffuse ideas about childhood and belonging were engaged through particular relations in the vicinity of Lollard.

Mills's (2013b, p.703) attention to the scholar's sensuous engagements with the ordinary materiality of archival objects and documents – which frustrate readers by 'literally flaking, breaking and discolour[ing] with time' – provides a necessary reminder of the 'passions, realities and fallibilities of doing research – in "real life" – ', which Horton, Kraftl and Tucker (2008, p.340) note, 'remain relatively underplayed, or even unspeakable'. Yet it is through these banal ways in which objects of knowledge resist simple definition, and documents 'often inadvertently [speak]' about silenced groups (Gagen, 2001, p.55) that scholars can map the shapes, structures, and histories of apparently 'given' categories. Indeed, the work of geographers attuned to the elusive ordinariness of the banal, 'space, place and everydayness' is emphatically situated, raising questions about approaches that assume a universal category of childhood (Horton, Kraftl and Tucker, 2008, p.340).

## 5. CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES AT LOLLARD

### 5.1 Introduction

According to its own constitution, the Lollard Street Adventure Playground Association (LAPA) was founded to produce and maintain

an adventure playground viz. a playground where movable equipment tools and materials are provided with a view to contributing to the health, well-being and happiness of the children and promoting their educational, physical and emotional development through a wide range of recreational activities (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1).

The playground was established on ‘a site fronting Lollard Street, Lambeth, S.W.11’ that was leased to the Association by the London County Council (hereafter L.C.C) (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1). In order to assist in the production of the playground, the LAPA hoped ‘to make and maintain contact with other persons and organizations who are interested in the establishment development or management of the adventure playground’ and to hire employees to provide daily management of the space (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1). At the same time, LAPA was constituted as a promotional body, with the object of ‘enabl[ing] interested persons to gain first-hand experience of the educational and other advantages provided for children in an adventure playground’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1).

Lollard’s location – on the site of a bombed school in the Kennington area of Lambeth, London – resulted primarily from bureaucratic and strategic concerns rather than the expressed wishes of neighbours. A ‘Memorandum’ produced by the Committee for use in soliciting funding highlights the location as ‘well placed for use as a demonstration project, since it is within walking distance, across the river, from the Houses of Parliament’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/14). Lady Allen and Mary Nicholson – who had previously worked together on the committee for the smaller Clydesdale Road playground (Allen and Nicholson, 1975) – buoyed by financial support from the NPFA, had been seeking a space in which to launch an ‘experimental’ project, and after a sustained campaign (MSS.121/AP/3/5/1-5) the London County Council (L.C.C.) offered to lease the site at a ‘nominal’ rent (MSS.121/AP/1/1/2). Although the minutes of the first Committee meeting suggest that the L.C.C. offer of the site was in response to local demand (MSS.121/AP/1/1/2), an October 1954 letter from the Education

Officer of the L.C.C. to Lady Allen reflects an agreement that the lease would be made ‘to a voluntary committee set up by yourself’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/9, underlining in the original). As Allen admits in her autobiography, the *local demand* was that the site, which had become an unofficial dumping ground, be turned into a ‘playground’—the use of the site as a radical spatial experiment had neither been commissioned nor vetted by local residents (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.238).

In this chapter I describe how Lollard Street Adventure Playground was socially produced and socially constructed and, in doing so, illuminate conflicting conceptions of belonging and social responsibility based on geographic location, age, and class. I argue that the social production of Lollard by *outsiders* as a space in which *children’s rights* – particularly the spatiotemporal *right to play* – could be fulfilled influenced the playground’s social construction by local adults as a space of disfranchisement. The first part of the chapter (5.2) focuses on the construction of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ identifications among residents of the immediate vicinity of Lollard. This section begins with a discussion of how geographically enmeshed social networks were disrupted by post-war urban planning and resettlement agendas (5.2.1) and then discusses how the almost complete exclusion of local residents from the initial production of the playground reinforced anxieties related to their impending dispossession and dislocation (5.2.2). The second part of this chapter (5.3) examines the discourses employed by the Committee in relation to social (re)production. This part begins with an examination of conceptions of child development, civilization and play that emerged from the site (5.3.1). It turns to a discussion of ideas about parental responsibility and social pathology (5.3.2), turning, finally, to the role of the play leader in ‘teaching freedom’ (5.3.3).

## **5.2 Belonging and Disrupted Spatial Identities**

In this section I examine how the category of childhood was reconstructed around Lollard. Kraftl (2006, p.488) has written about the importance of attending to the most mundane (or banal, or everyday) materials and practices by which ‘ideas and ideals of “childhood” are constructed’. I adopt an approach that examines the forms that the situated-ness of childhood can assume (the spaces,



forms and materials of its construction) in order to locate specific forms of childhood in a particular place.

### 5.2.1 'Old Lambeth'

[T]he people of Old Lambeth present characteristics quite unique in my experience. [...] These families are usually large and very close knit. A typical child from one of these families will speak of numerous relatives who live up and down the district and in speaking of them usually conveys an air of great affection and of elemental certitude of their affection for him. [...] On the small central island of the district they have known everyone and are known by everyone. [...] I gathered a strong impression of loyalty among these people which I have not encountered ever before. I have been astonished at how little such families know of London. Their island is all they know or care about. (Turner, 1961, p.26)

The depiction, above, provided by H. S. Turner – the third and final play leader at Lollard – is reinforced by narratives posted on a historical memory blog about Kennington, *Jimmy's Lambeth* (2008). Turner's (1961, p.26) nostalgic image of a small face-to-face community of large, 'close knit' families unique in their 'affection' and 'elemental certitude' draws on the convention of travel writing's primitive cosmos (Stasch, 2011) – an isolated island of the past (in walking distance from the Houses of Parliament). Other contributors recount terraced houses shared by large families, with outdoor toilets and concerted attempts at respectability (*Jimmy's Lambeth*, 2008). These reflections share imagery of strong, locally oriented social networks characterized by multi-generational households held together by traditional forms of authority and romanticized working-class poverty. Turner's image of a 'small [...] island' provides a dramatic contrast to the wartime blitz that drew the Lollard site into the orbit of modern urban planning. Indeed, the idea that Lambeth's residents were unprepared to meet the 'modern world' of greater London, bombs, and urban planning – implicit in the idea of a 'small island' of traditional values – was central to the construction of authority of urban planners and other outside experts. The narrative is a colonial one: dragged suddenly into the world by bombs, Lollard's native inhabitants needed guidance from outsiders.

The damage wrought by WWII bombing campaigns exacerbated hardships stemming from the laissez-fair housing policies of the late-nineteenth

and early-twentieth century and intensified pressure for comprehensive urban planning strategies in inner-city London (Porter, 1994). One of the most influential comprehensive plans, which emerged during the war in anticipation of its end, was John Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie's *County of London Plan*, prepared for the L.C.C in 1943. Forshaw and Abercrombie's plan proposed a large-scale, functionalist rebuilding program (Kozlovsky, 2008), meant to remake London in the aftermath of the war and to 'give it order and efficiency and beauty and spaciousness' (Forshaw and Abercrombie, 1943, p.12). Kozlovsky (2008, pp.179-180) argues that the adventure playgrounds developed in London in that post-war era represent direct challenges to the rationalist, centralized planning paradigm of functionalism through their emphasis on 'incremental' rebuilding schemes 'carried out with the participation of the population'.

In the context of government redevelopment pressures, long-term working class residents of Lambeth in the mid-twentieth century faced geographic displacement. In a companion essay to the *County of London Plan* published in *The Geographical Journal*, Abercrombie (1943, p.236) argues that it is not 'possible to obtain the full proportion of open spaces that there should be within the London County area. [...] open spaces have to be found in parts of London at present used for housing purposes'. By the mid-1950s, Kennington residents had already begun receiving removal notices from the L.C.C. Joe Benjamin (1961, p.47) – the second play leader at Lollard – writes in a Nuffield Foundation-sponsored study, *In Search of Adventure*, that when the playground first opened in 1955, '[t]he houses in the area, small, overcrowded and in a bad state of repair, were marked for demolition. ... All [of the inhabitants] waited to be rehoused'. Likewise, the 1958 edition of *The Lollard Adventure Magazine* features a piece written by playground attender Joan Westcott, titled 'About Me and My Family', that opens with a short poem that includes the lines 'I know Ethelred Street/ 'Cause I live there' (MSS.121/AP/3/5/27). After listing her eight siblings – underlining the importance of family attachment to the location – Joan recounts their forthcoming eviction by the L.C.C.: 'Soon the houses are coming down and we are going to live in the country and the London County Council said we have got to get out of London because they are building new houses in the country. We have lived in our house eight years' (MSS.121/AP/3/5/27). Another story published in an earlier edition of *The Lollard Adventure Magazine*,

‘Peter and Jennifer Find Adventure’ – written by playground attenders Ted Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins and Christine Collins – narrates the initial excitement and later disappointment of two fictional siblings who discover Lollard only to find out upon returning home that they will be forced to move away (MSS.121/AP/3/5/25). Indeed, heightened fears of displacement along class-lines exhibited during the playground’s existence were not unwarranted; following increased regulation of the rental market introduced by the late-1960s Labour government, the Victorian housing stock of Kennington was progressively converted back into single-family homes, further exacerbating middle-class gentrification and working-class displacement (Porter, 1994). These anxieties played out around Lollard among residents and visitors through perceptions of social distance, ‘us’ and ‘them’. This dynamic is the subject of the next section.

### 5.2.2 ‘THEM’

I say something about ‘your playground.’ This is received with derision. ‘The L.C.C. done it,’ says one. I say that the council has certainly helped but that the voluntary association is responsible and carries the main burden of the work.

‘Oh, you mean the Committee. Those ladies you had here yesterday. What do they want round here? What are they getting out of it?’ (Turner, 1961, pp.20-21)

...

Some [mothers] admitted that they ‘once came to a meeting’ but the general view was ‘It’s the Council; and you can’t do anything with THEM.’

‘Them’ has a composite meaning. It certainly covers the Government and the Council and may or may not include individuals who live in a ‘better district’ or who ‘speak posh.’ Whatever views one holds on the subject of class distinctions one has to admit that this use of the word ‘them’ represents something real. (Turner, 1961, p.29)

Ideas about belonging held by the residents of the area surrounding Lollard were tied up in geographic and class identifications. From the viewpoint of the residents, the people that ran Lollard – the Committee and the play leaders – were outsiders and their presence, along with that of other visitors invited by the Committee for promotional purposes, served as a physical reminder of inequalities. This dynamic sharpened pre-existing sensitivities about affluence and political representation. The residents of Lollard became *locals*, their locality constructed around the site through their relations with Lollard and the

*outsiders* who came to govern it. A former volunteer play leader at Lollard, Sheila Beskine (1961, p.210), writing in a special edition of the journal *Anarchy* dedicated to adventure playgrounds, points to organisation scale as engendering identifications of otherness – meaning not *us* – among Kennington residents: ‘[a] vast administrative set-up automatically becomes “Them” [*sic*]. ... ‘Because the LCC is “Them” [*sic*] and is also huge, it merges in people’s minds with the other Thems, like Income Tax, the Rates, and the Government’. Likewise, Turner (1961, p.124) characterized the political inclinations of the *locals* as detached and apathetic: ‘The general belief that THEY are oppressing US more or less covers it and rarely leads on to any more specific loyalty or active support for responsible political action’. Small-scale inequalities of power, such as between the *locals* and the Committee, serve as concrete models for other, more diffuse inequalities. The classification of people identified with the running of the playground as *them* that Turner and Beskine point to reveals significant conflicts regarding how socio-spatial control and responsibility was interpreted and experienced. Inequalities of wealth, control and decision-making tended to produce notions of *outsiders*.

The Committee was primarily comprised of relatively affluent non-residents of the local community; only two of the twelve founding members of LAPA lived in S.W.11. The remaining members were representatives of the L.C.C., the Borough of Lambeth, the NPFA, the London and Greater London Playing Fields Association, and the Divisional Education Office (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1). The minutes of the first official meeting reflect an awareness of the problematic nature of the ‘outsider’ position of the committee members, who were ‘fully agreed on the importance of establishing the playground as a local venture. Those members who are not resident in Lambeth hoped that their places on the Committee would soon be taken by people living and working in the Borough’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/2). However, the minutes then report that the Committee was ‘assured’ by the Mayor of Lambeth ‘that at this stage the services of those who had experience of Adventure Playgrounds, irrespective of where they came from was needed’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/2). As will be demonstrated below, over the lifespan of Lollard, the committee members disregarded several opportunities for transfer of power through the inclusion of local representatives in the decision-making executive body.

The rhetorical structuring of Lollard as a project founded in direct response to local demand was employed by the Committee to discredit concerns raised by local residents throughout the playground's lifespan. A 1956 publicity pamphlet published by the Committee notes that Kennington residents – led by Lollard Street resident G. Maynard, who served as the Vice-Chairman of the Committee – had ‘urged’ for the bomb-site to be converted into a ‘place where their children could play happily, off the streets’ (Nicholson, 1956, p.4). However, the initiative for using the space as an adventure playground came from ‘the people who were working to develop them’ (Nicholson, 1956, p.4) – that is, Lady Allen and Mary Nicholson, who, through a campaign of letter-writing, speeches and direct appeals had successfully pressured the NPFA and the L.C.C. to financially support the development of Lollard (Allen and Nicholson, 1975). The idea that elites can (re)produce their privilege by claiming to represent the inhabitants of some particular place, while at the same time ensuring that any failures are blamed on local inhabitants is a common one in literature critiquing NGOs (Mercer, 2002; Mohan and Stokke, 2000). By reinforcing the idea that local residents had requested the playground, the Committee was able to displace blame for perceived failures (such as the continued unattractiveness of the site and the continued dominance of outsiders in the organization of the playground) through a discourse of parental apathy and local irresponsibility.

One of the major barriers to local inclusion was the scheduling of Committee meetings, which were held on weekday mornings. Although the Committee was aware of the difficulty the meeting time caused, they consistently rejected opportunities to change the time (MSS.121/AP/1/1/28, MSS.121/AP/1/1/29, MSS.121/AP/1/1/33, MSS.121/AP/1/1/51). Indeed, the Committee meeting minutes from May 1957 record that ‘[i]t was agreed that the time of the Executive Meeting should [...] be changed to Thursday afternoon so that some shopkeepers might be able to serve’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/33), yet the minutes from more than a year later reflect that the meetings were still being held in the mornings and note that this made it impossible for anyone from the self-formed Parents’ Committee to attend (MSS.121/AP/1/1/58). Moreover, beyond the two local residents included in the original Committee, local residents and parents were not even invited to take part in the production of the playground

until December 1955 (MSS.121/AP/1/1/16), over a year after the lease for the site was offered to Lady Allen. Indeed, an initial report on the Committee's plans notes that membership, 'especially among local supporters', will not be 'extend[ed]' until the Committee's 'plans for this season can be presented in a concrete form' following 'a great deal of preliminary work' (MSS.121/AP/3/5/14). This was despite the awareness that Lady Allen expressed in an earlier report that '[t]here will undoubtedly be opposition from parents and others, unless they are brought in at an early stage and their cooperation sought' (MSS.121/AP/3/5/1). The exclusion of a majority of local residents from the initial production of the playground meant that by the time membership was democratized, Lollard had already been significantly socially constructed within the neighbourhood as a space controlled by outsiders. In the next section, I turn more specifically to the ways in which idea(l)s about childhood (Kraftl, 2006) were often constructed in opposition to perceptions about working-class parents, and the construction of the play leader as a mediating force in the social (re)production of 'civilization'.

### **5.3 Development and Social (Re)production**

In this section I discuss the how the (adult) organizers of Lollard conceived of childhood in relation to society, particularly how children were understood to be influenced by the post-industrial, post-war physical and social environment, including the perceived threat of encroaching pathology whether through negative parental influence or spatial limitations. In attempting to understand why Lollard was produced, it is useful to examine conceptions of child development and economic development in concert.

#### *5.3.1 Conceptions of Child Development, Civilization and Play*

The founders of Lollard, Lady Allen in particular, propagated a view of children as future citizens who were moulded over the course of adolescence through opportunities or deprivations encountered in the social and physical environments in which they found themselves. Within the prevailing discourse employed by the adults who ran Lollard, society – meaning adults – and parents, in particular, bore the responsibility for providing children with proper behavioural models and material support for ideal development. Residential

overcrowding, built permanence and concentrated poverty – facets of urbanization and what Lady Allen termed ‘modern town conditions’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/1) – were assumed to deprive children growing up in inner-city areas of the opportunities for gaining skills deemed necessary to regenerate civilization following the social disruption caused by WWII. And the deprivations of ‘modern town conditions’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/1), Allen argued, were compounded by the ‘arrogance’ of functionalist planning policies (Allen, 1972, p.8).

The contrasts between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ – which animated Turner’s image of a ‘small island’ (see 5.3.1) –, between natural and built, and between playful and arrogant also inflected understandings of children and what came naturally to them. The risks of ‘modern town conditions’ were a threat to children’s future ability to regenerate civilization. Free play, constructed as natural and playful in contradistinction to the rigid arrogance of functionalist planning, perhaps, provided an antidote.

Freely undertaken play activities were understood in humanistic terms – as ‘natural’ (Benjamin, 1961, p.53) – and in developmental terms – as ‘their work’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/12): ‘in an Adventure Playground ... [a child] can enjoy the immediate satisfaction of doing what comes in a natural way, and at the same time, in a healthy unconscious fashion, exercise and develop his physical and mental faculties’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/14). The availability of ‘adaptable’, movable materials was considered paramount (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.238). Indeed, Lady Allen supplied a string of criticisms about ‘equipment fixed in unalterable form’ (Allen, 1968, p.18), asserting that ‘[c]hildren want, above all, things they can move about and use for all sorts of purposes’ (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.238). Allen’s argument was echoed by former assistant play leader Donne Buck (1965, p.2), who argues in a Ford Foundation-funded study that defacement and attempts at destruction ‘is a typical reaction of many children, not only deprived teenagers, to a provided facility which they have had no part in creating’.

The idea that free play was natural implied a symbolic inversion. In the absence of places set aside to afford pro-social play, the natural impulse would emerge in antisocial acts of delinquency. A discourse of delinquency prevention was consistently used to justify the creation of the adventure playground

(MSS.121/AP/3/5/14; Allen, 1946; MSS.121/AP/1/1/2; Buck, 1965), beginning with a letter Lady Allen wrote in response to a December 1952 article about juvenile delinquency that was published in *The Times* (Allen and Nicholson, 1975). Lady Allen later reported opportunistically emphasizing this discourse in the service of public relations concerns (Allen and Nicholson, 1975), such as her challenge to the L.C.C. in 1953: ‘I cannot believe that the L.C.C would wish to neglect any opportunity to reduce delinquency’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/5). Referring to London, Lady Allen asserted in a 1953 report which called for the creation of an adventure playground, that ‘no real attempt has yet been made to absorb the interest of the impressionable group of children and young people between the ages of 6 and 15’. Allen goes on to describe the leisure time of this age group as ‘largely empty and purposeless’, marking it as an ‘age span’ in which ‘the first steps into law breaking occur, because the activities that are play to them, are regarded as delinquency by adults’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/1).

The conflict between the expectations of adult-oriented society and children’s play inclinations was tied – through Lady Allen – to a discourse of anti-urbanism. In this view, ‘the barren unhappiness that leads to delinquency’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/1) was not only inclusive of physical failures of the built environment – such as limited open space – but also the spatiotemporal disruption of adult-child interactions that proceeded from urban segregation of industry from residential life – in which economic activity was regimented to a degree that excluded young people from enskilling experiences of causal observation and participation (Allen and Nicholson, 1975). However, the conception that children residing near Lollard were divorced from adult economic activity is challenged by observations presented by Turner (1961) of children assuming active roles in family-run market stalls and household labour – childcare activities and commodity procurement. Nevertheless, perceived spatial constriction was seen to exacerbate age-related divergence of spatiotemporal uses, necessitating compensation for a disappearing natural habitat in ‘this battle against unhappiness and boredom’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/5): ‘a child who has no other open air-play space, apart from the streets, may well be tempted to display his enterprise in unacceptable ways’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/14).

The perceived need for a ‘training-place for future leaders’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/40) is part of what gave questions about the management of



children's 'urge[s]' (Allen, 1972, p.8) their moral urgency, linking particular debates about children 'to a larger, collective, more enduring and therefore less context-bound cause or interest' (Tambiah, 1996, p.192) – in this case, utopian intentions (Kraftl, 2009) linked to ideas about the future of 'civilization'. Inasmuch as the Committee constructed its expertise (legitimacy, authority) on the grounds of knowledge about children, the Committee's legitimacy devalued parents' knowledge and expertise. (It is hardly surprising, then, that parents seemed to have experienced the Committee's actions as a kind of very intimate dispossession.) The Committee members claimed to know what was best for children in a universal sense – using language such as '[c]hildren the world over' (Allen, 1972, p.8) – thus in effect claiming a kind of supreme parental role for themselves. Thus, the Committee naturalized its authority by making it seem continuous with familiar forms of family hierarchy (parent-child). In the following section I examine the Committee's claims to knowledge and expertise played out in practice.

### *5.3.2 Parental Responsibility and Social Pathology Discourses*

The committee was obliged by the terms of the original lease for the site to be responsive to the demands of adjacent residents. The lease – offered by the L.C.C. and accepted by the Committee – certified that the Committee – as 'lessees' – would be responsible for ensuring that 'any act matter or thing of a dangerous noxious noisome or offensive nature or which may be or grow to be a danger nuisance annoyance or disturbance ... to the owner or occupiers for the time being of adjacent premises or to the public' would be denied and or removed from the site (MSS.121/AP/3/5/23). That is to say, the Committee accepted responsibility for producing Lollard in a manner that was agreeable to the surrounding inhabitants.

Despite the responsibility that the Committee accepted through the lease, a vast gulf existed between the playground form that the inhabitants sought and that which the Committee desired to implement. Aware of this conflict, but convinced of the superiority of their own ideals, the Committee was not particularly forthcoming in their initial depictions of their plans to the inhabitants. Benjamin (1961, p.50), quoting his initial journal entry as play leader at Lollard (March 1956), observes 'local feeling towards the playground is

not too good ... the people had been led to believe that the playground would become something more formal, with levelled green areas and trees' (p.50). Benjamin further notes that '[t]o the parents and people in the neighbourhood generally, the adventure section was only a temporary phase, a makeshift until money could be found to lay out a completely designed playground' (1961, p.51). Although in his resignation letter Benjamin expresses frustration with the inhabitants' desire to 'transform the playground into a pleasant formal park' (1961, p.51), he chastises the Committee for their failure to connect parents and other local residents to their goals. Benjamin phrases the lack of any attempt to organize a parents' committee as a 'deficiency in the organization of the playground' (p.51) and asserts that '[t]here is no record of any attempt ever having been made to explain the needs of children or the purpose of the committee in establishing an adventure playground' (p.53).

Benjamin indicts the Committee for the predominance of 'outsiders' (1961, p.53) in its composition, pointing to the failure to even approach 'the nearby church and tenants' organization' (p.54). '[I]t seems', he wrote, 'that no attempt was made to win [the parents] active co-operation as a group or to settle fundamental differences of opinion' (p.54). As much as inequalities of authority, spatial and temporal barriers (the timing of meetings), and aesthetic preferences divided insiders and outsiders, their differences were animated by ideas about the nature of childhood.

Rather than cede control by attempting to win over parents to their view of childhood and play, Committee members employed a discourse of local irresponsibility to justify their own failure to foster local support for Lollard. As previously discussed in section 5.2.2, the Committee had in effect erected barriers to participation by parents and local residents in the executive decision-making apparatus of the Association. The disinclination of the Committee to any concrete transfer of power – and concurrent negation of their own influence – was linked to the social production of Lollard as a site on which ideals about children's spatial rights could be promoted. The perception that local residents were not inclined to reproduce Lollard in accordance with these ideological goals led the founders to not only maintain control over the production of the playground, but in the process to construct the parents as abrogating their

responsibility for their children's development as ideal citizens – thereby classing the parents as irresponsible citizens themselves.

The claim that parents and local residents were 'ignorant' of the needs of their children was a useful justification for outsider control. Local 'ignorance' was deemed to necessitate the involvement of the 'informed', 'educated' Committee members and play leaders, whose 'experience' and 'knowledge' of child development superseded the judgement of parents. Beskine recounts her visit as a guest to tea at the home of a family whose children regularly attended the playground, noting the disrepair of the rented house – '[t]he walls were all peeled paper with bits of wood and plaster exposed in places' – and her host's concerns – 'telling me about the terrible rent and the terrible houses and the cheek of the Council' – before placing responsibility for such conditions on the hosts: 'They were in the list for a new flat in Camberwell, but I wondered how that would improve difficulties basically due to very poor intelligence' (1961, p.206). In reference to another child from a separate family, Beskine writes '[s]he's very spiteful; both her parents are practically mentally deficient' (1961, p.209). A focus on the perceived mental deficiencies of parents and other local residents enabled reformers to counteract local criticism of their projects by shifting responsibility for failures back onto the inhabitants, themselves, through assertions that the inhabitants simply did not understand what was best for them or their children.

The discourse of parental (ir)responsibility and ignorance employed by Committee members also drew on a popular discourse of social pathology that represented the problems of poverty as stemming from the psychological deficiencies of the poor – and their reckless excess: poor family planning and bad parenting – , rather than structural economic and political inequalities (see Wootton, 1959). Although the discourse of social pathology as a root cause of urban degradation was later rejected in the 1972 Inner Area Study of Lambeth – sponsored by the Secretary of State for the Environment – during the 1950s and early 1960s it constituted the dominant conceptual frame through which social reformers understood the inhabitants of impoverished communities such as the ones immediately surrounding Lollard (Tallon, 2010).

While the Committee and play leaders claimed that the parents lacked the intelligence and responsibility needed to raise future citizens, parents in turn

drew on a language of rights as tax-paying citizens in order to assert some influence over the production of the playground. Committee members' dismissals as imaginary folktales – 'legends' (Nicholson, 1960, p.8) – of parents' claims are recorded in archival documents. The voices of parents themselves are more difficult to recover. The main sources accessible regarding the history of parental involvement at Lollard are products of the Committee's procedures and play leader accounts. Meeting minutes, pamphlets, and promotional materials rarely record parents' perspectives – partly because the Committee placed many impediments to parental participation. Indeed, the parental objections were not recorded except to be dismissed reveals the unequal nature of the revelations which produced the archives.

For example, in a pamphlet about Lollard, Nicholson (1960, p.8) attempts to absolve the Committee of public responsibility: 'a legend still persists that the playground is provided, out of public money, by THEM<sup>1</sup>. [...] the Association is a voluntary body, depending on the efforts of private people'. Nicholson's assertion ignores the very real ways in which the organizational model of the playground did in fact rely on public funds: the virtually free ('nominal' rent) use of L.C.C. land and a series of L.C.C.-funded capital grants (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1). Indeed, Lollard represents a social service delivery model which has come to dominate in contemporary neoliberal municipal park management – a private organization that is structurally enabled—and at times partially funded – by a local government entity to produce and administer a public amenity (see Williams, 2006; Howell, 2008). The rhetoric of 'taxes' employed by the parents and local residents, rather than 'refus[al] to understand', can be viewed as a language of protest against the experience of compounding disenfranchisement and dislocation embodied through 'THEM' – 'North Bank' elites who were largely unresponsive to the expressed needs of working-class people living in Kennington (Turner, 1961, p.29).

Abstract concepts (insider, THEM, childhood) are actualized through concrete practices. Horton and Kraftl (2009) have argued, with reference to

---

<sup>1</sup> It is important to understand that, in contrast to the other uses of 'THEM' quoted throughout this analysis, 'THEM' is employed here by Nicholson (1960, p.8) to reference the residents living around Lollard, whose complaints alluded to their role as taxpayers.

children's centres (part of Sure Start, 'a UK-Government programme to improve children's well-being in "deprived" neighbourhoods'), that everyday practices and relations of care are the real 'matter' out of which larger patterns of social life are built. ('Small practices – practicing meeting strangers, sitting and talking, making mugs of coffee – were in many ways fundamental to the Sure Start projects' (p.2995).) They show that in policy-oriented assessments, writers tend to neglect the commonplace, emphasizing instead the dramatic, while ignoring the 'co(i)mplications' of policy, politics and emotions (Horton and Kraftl, 2009, p.2998). At Lollard, the play leader provides a useful illustration of the contradictory ways in which ordinary care work played out over a small landscape of the playground. The next section examines the role of the play leader in constructing freedom by imposing an ambiguous form of authority.

### *5.3.3 Teaching Freedom: Play Leader as Friend, Behavioural Model and Disciplinarian*

The play leader was seen as the primary tool in the prevention of delinquent behaviour (MSS.121/AP/3/5/1). Positive interaction with adults of good character was considered the principle way in which children avoid antisocial behaviour. According to the minutes of the first meeting of the Lollard EC, Lady Allen asserted that '[a]n Adventure playground ... is particularly attractive to older children, especially to the unclubbable children who may be a problem elsewhere. The character of the leader, or skipper, is all-important' (MSS.121/AP/1/1/2). Common among proponents of the early adventure playground movement was the sentiment that the ideal strategy of the play leader is to covertly convince the children that they, themselves, want to choose the behaviours considered preferable by adults (see Kozlovsky, 2013; Vanderbeck, 2008). In contrast to attempting to directly instruct the participants, the play leader's role was to serve as a 'friendly' adult (Turner, 1961, p.5; Nicholson, 1954).

There are obvious contradictions between the Committee's professed opinion that the play leader was the most important element of an adventure playground's success and the actual employment conditions of the play leaders at Lollard. The high turnover rate of play leaders was a direct result: in the playground's five years of operation there were several successive play leaders

(see Turner, 1961). According to Committee meeting minutes, the first leader, Harry Killick, attempted to resign within three months of taking up the post due to unsuitable working conditions: long working hours with no times allotted for meals or restroom breaks, micro-managing by Committee members, and the lack of shelter and restroom facilities on the site (Benjamin, 1961, p.47). Killick's initial attempts to resign prompted a discussion regarding the improvement of working conditions (MSS.121/AP/1/1/11) that led to an agreement for finite working hours and vacation time (MSS.121/AP/1/1/12). Following Killick's final resignation in March 1956, Joe Benjamin took over as play leader (MSS.121/AP/1/1/18-19). Benjamin resigned two months later, citing his frustration that 'the children will not be allowed to experiment nor play in a manner which is natural in a playground of this type' (Benjamin, 1961, p.53, quoting his own resignation letter), as well as criticizing the Committee for the exclusivity of their meetings and the lack of transparency regarding their policy deliberations (Benjamin, 1961, pp.49-50). Moreover, the first assistant-play leader, Donne Buck, resigned (MSS.121/AP/1/1/51) after being denied a requested promotion (MSS.121/AP/1/1/50) despite the Committee having previously noted that the assistant's salary was inadequate (MSS.121/AP/1/1/42).

Play leader resignation was not the only problem. Even in the early stages of the adventure playground movement, the term 'leader' was recognized as problematic, with Lady Allen noting that the identifier 'suggests power rather than influence' (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.238). This differentiation between 'power' and 'influence' is challenged by Kozlovsky (2008) in his argument that '[i]n the case of the [adventure] playground, power does not operate by dominating or disciplining subjects who were previously free, but rather by activating subjects and making them aspire to be free' (p.4). For children gathered at Lollard the play leader, as the person who ultimately controlled access to the playground's resources, represented the most intimate presence of authority (see 6.3.3).

Although disciplinary practices likely differed under the various play leaders, the clearest record remains of Turner's tenure, which was also the longest, spanning from 1956 to shortly before the playground's closing (Turner, 1961). Turner, while determined to be both friend and exemplar, did not fully relinquish the role of traditional disciplinarian. Despite writing "there is no

formal authority – only the authority the children give me of their own free will” (Turner, 1961, p.15), upon assuming his post at Lollard, Turner attempted to demonstrate the authority given to him by virtue of his control of the playground’s resources. ‘If you want to come in, you’ll have to do it my way’ Turner (1961, p.14) asserted; ‘If you don’t feel like obeying a few simple rules, you can go away’ (Turner, 1961, p.12). However, despite implementing a few concrete rules – no smoking by children under 14, no cursing, no loitering – enforcement was primarily implemented through a refusal to engage. Engagement was a form of resource (emotional support) control in itself. Play workers’ quotidian use of affective bonds as a resource for managing children in the absence of formal authority reveals what Horton and Kraftl (2009), in the course of their examination of the co-implication of emotion and policy – termed emotional geographies – the ordinary affective landscapes of social relations that are often neglected in policy research.

The play leader, as a ‘responsible’ behavioral model, was meant to serve as a counterpoint to the perceived failings of local parents and offer opportunities for gaining citizenship skills. In discussing Lollard, a 1960 NPFA pamphlet heralds the playground’s affordance of ‘pleasures and interests and responsibilities’ (Nicholson, 1960, p.5). As Kozlovsky (2008) argues, ‘inciting children to appropriate and master space, to make it their own – “to identify with it, because it would be theirs” – was intended to attach children at risk to the social body by providing them with a sense of ownership and agency’ (p.29; citing Lambert, 1974, p.56). The use of passive power strategies – as opposed to authoritarian discipline – was necessary to ensure that the children socially constructed Lollard as a ‘free society in miniature’ (Ward, 1961, p.201) ‘where they can learn to come to terms with the responsibilities of freedom’ (Allen, 1972, p.8).

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined a field of forces that took shape around the Lollard Street Adventure Playground. This chapter explored the social production of Lollard at a particular site in Lambeth that reconfigured historically dynamic triangular relations of belonging and location, age, and class. The social construction of the site engaged wider processes of socio-spatial change, bringing

together ideas about childhood, utopian hopes and fears about urban pathology and the direction of social change in post-war London. Elsewhere, Katz (2001a, p.717) has described this process as ‘scale-jumping’.

Chapter 4 described the deceptive transparency of common sense categories like childhood. In this chapter, Chapter 5, I suggested that the transparency of the playground’s purpose – ‘to contribut[e] to the health, well-being and happiness of the children and to promot[e] their educational, physical and emotional development’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1) – , though accurate enough, obscured the extent to which other processes, such as dispossession and dislocation, were being discussed through discourses about children and childhood. Being enrolled in wider discussions inflected the reconstruction of childhood. In the next chapter, Chapter 6, I continue to examine the ways in which inequalities of age and class were materially and spatially reproduced and reconfigured. Chapter 6 also explores how the social production and construction of Lollard engaged larger debates at a specific site and, by doing so, continually re-constructed and re-stabilized ideas and ideals of childhood.



## 6. SPATIALIZING INEQUALITY AT LOLLARD

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to illustrate the specific ways in which inequalities of age and class were materially and spatially reproduced and reconfigured at Lollard, both within the playground site itself and throughout the surrounding neighbourhood. Issues of dependence, power, and autonomy are illuminated through an examination of the contested spatial values of aesthetics and affordance (the availability of materials for divergent play) codified in the Lollard Adventure Playground Association Constitution. The adult organizers of Lollard intended – at least rhetorically – for the playground to serve as a site of autonomous childhood, where children could make their own decisions about the use of space. However, the actual practices employed by the Committee gave preference to aesthetic values over the children’s free exploration of affordances. Often, assertions of power by the Committee over spatial usage corresponded directly to public relations concerns.

Throughout the life of the playground, the Committee was explicitly concerned with raising the profile of the adventure playground, mounting publicity campaigns and tracking the levels and type of publicity that it received (MSS.121/AP/1/1/44). Ultimately, the level of publicity perceived to be necessary to strengthen the playground’s financial and political viability (MSS.121/AP/1/1/44) presented a conflict between the ‘preferential’ use of the space and the autonomy of user’s play. The contested landscapes of the playground reveal assertions of power by various actors.

I argue that the specific material and spatial practices present at Lollard reveal limitations of an adult-orchestrated, universalist approach to play space provision. The organizers held as foundational the principle that children have an inalienable right to play – and by extension, space to play in (see 5.3.1). Furthermore, the Committee’s actions suggest that this right should be protected and provided for without regard to the political and economic structures in which an area’s inhabitants – of all ages – live. As a result, the Committee constructed a conflict between the needs of children and the needs of adults (parents) rather than working towards meeting the needs of families.

This chapter is organized into three parts. I begin by discussing the ways in which Lollard (re)constructed scenes of destruction (6.2). This section begins with an examination of how the use of bomb sites for playgrounds acts as a form of utopian re-signification (6.2.1) and then explores the organizers' simultaneous (and contradictory) attempts to foster a sense of ownership of (and identification with) the playground among the local inhabitants during their residential dispossession (6.2.2). The next section examines concepts of (dis)order in relation to the social production and construction of Lollard (6.3) through a focus on the children's 'right' to (de)construct aspects of the built environment (6.3.1), the relationship between external aesthetic pressures and adults' determinations about the (mis)use of space (6.3.2), and attempts to order social relations within the playground through policies of informal ownership and exclusion (6.3.3). I then turn to aspects of social (re)production at Lollard and the wider construction of adventure playgrounds as 'the workshop of the child' (Benjamin, 1961) (6.4). I do so by examining how activities considered by the playground organizers to be productive were encouraged and exploited for publicity and fund-raising (6.4.1). I then turn to the role of Lollard participants in the outward expansion of the adventure playground movement through their assistance in the production of several new adventure playground projects (6.4.2).

## **6.2 (Re)constructing Scenes of Destruction**

In the previous chapter I discussed in broad terms how Lollard was socially constructed by the adult inhabitants of the surrounding area as furthering an on-going process of disfranchisement and displacement at the hands of 'North Bank' elites. In this section I examine more specifically how the social construction of Lollard was intertwined with processes of physical destruction. Using the work of Highmore (2013) as a point of departure, I argue that, for residents of Kennington, the Lollard Street School bombsite and the L.C.C.'s redevelopment schemes mutually resonated as destructive forces.

### *6.2.1 Recoding Bombsites*

The symbolic potential of the creation of parks – places for recreation, self-improvement and renewal – on bomb-damaged sites was not lost on the English public. For instance, an article in the *Times of London* speculated that

when a memorial park opened in Hertfordshire – replete with sports pitches and an adventure playground – ‘it will become a symbol’ (Anon, 1955, p.7)

The siting of the playground amid the carcass of a bombed school building can be understood as both opportunistic and symbolic. Lady Allen had previously advocated for the use of bombsites as adventure playgrounds so that they might act as sites of regeneration, wherein children might be actively involved in the rebuilding process (Allen, 1946). Likewise, Benjamin (1961, p.15) asserts, ‘[l]ong before the adult world was even in a position to start replanning, the children, using the bricks and rubble freely to hand, had begun to build’. As a practical matter, the grounds of the former Lollard Street School were offered to Lady Allen by the L.C.C. (MSS.121/AP/3/5/7) in response to constituent pressure to redevelop the site as a park (Turner, 1961) and pressure from Allen to supply a space in which to produce an NPFA-sponsored experimental playground (MSS.121/AP/3/5/3-6). At the same time, children at play in the rubble of bombsites constituted a powerful symbol, its iconography evoking post-war ambivalence about the future development of both children and society (Highmore, 2013).

While the symbolic contrast afforded by children on the bombsites may have resonated more strongly with adults, adults were not the first to reimagine the sites. Children had already appropriated London’s bombsites for play before efforts had begun to be taken by adults to systematically transform them into adventure playgrounds (Allen, 1946; Paneth, 1944). Indeed, a contributor on the *Jimmy’s Lambeth* historical memory blog recounts playing there before the playground was produced: ‘Our playgrounds in those days were the streets of South London and its Bombsites, one in particular was the site of Lollard St. School which was firebombed during the war and burnt to the ground. This later became the location of the Lollard Adventure Playground’ (Crow, 2007). The production of Lollard Adventure Playground, then, was in many ways a formalization of the pre-existing phenomenon of children’s frequent attraction to bombsites as play environments. If the construction of junk playgrounds formalized children’s already existing play, the process also formalized adult and class power, turning over to particular adults the power to authorize and reimagine sites of children’s play.

Efforts to institutionalize the play environments of children can be understood as an attempt to influence moral development in the act of (re)producing an ideal civilization (see Gagen, 2007; Kozlovsky, 2013; Cavallo, 1981; Frost, 2010)—in this case, a romanticized pre-war Imperial Britain (see 5.2.1). Pointing to widespread fears among the British population regarding the uncertainties of post-war rebuilding, Highmore (2013, p.330) argues that bombsites, beyond serving as markers of ‘recent traumas and unleashed aggression’, provided a localized manifestation ‘of moral as well as physical danger’ which ‘needed recoding as a place of moral fortitude rather than a place of potential immorality’. In arguing for the production of ‘an experimental playground’ in 1953, Lady Allen writes, ‘[t]here is much anxiety, at the apathy, ignorance and behaviour of young people, and yet little is done to capture their interest and build on their latent enthusiasms’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/1). Not surprisingly, popular anxieties about the direction of social change in post-war England coalesced around the physical traces of bombs.

Building spaces for children on bombsites tended to construct a neat, point-by-point contrast between children at play and adults at war, with children standing for an idealized future imagined against activities undertaken by adults in the past. The primary mode of deliberate ‘recoding’ at Lollard was the presence of the play leader, who was meant to serve as a model of moral behaviour (as discussed in section 5.3.3). However, bombsites were not the only form of urban destruction experienced by the residents of post-war London. Attempts to reorder the built environment through urban redevelopment produced further ambiguity in conceptions of the future (Highmore, 2013).

Highmore (2013, p.324) points to the juxtaposition of ‘ruined urban landscapes’ and children at play as representing an ‘image-repertoire of post-war Britain fashioning the moods and feelings of redevelopment from wrecked landscapes’. Dismissing differentiations between bomb damage and slum-clearance as being largely irrelevant, Highmore argues that the functionality of this image-repertoire is the melding of ‘bomb damage and redevelopment into a single continuum’ of destruction of pre-existing entities of the built environment (2013, p.324). Crump (1999), in a study of post-industrial redevelopment in Illinois, points to how ‘devalued landscapes’ – in this case abandoned factories rather than bomb sites – provided opportunities for elites to rest control from

local working-class interests: ‘Those with the power to shape urban redevelopment also possess the ability to shape the landscape as private interests are able to impose their “vision” upon the landscape’ (pp.297-8). During the 1950s in Kennington – the area immediately surrounding Lollard – during the late 1950s bomb damage was a physical presence, yet the physical destruction of redevelopment was still a future threat. For Kennington’s residents, anxieties about displacement due to planned urban redevelopment were concretized through relocation notices. Placing bomb damage and urban decay on a single continuum also serves to hide the role of policy in creating urban inequalities, absolving the authors of relocation notices of responsibility. This did not go unnoticed by Kennington’s residents.

#### *6.2.2 Ownership Identification in a Time of Dispossession*

The houses in the area, small, overcrowded and in a bad state of repair, were earmarked for demolition. Most of the inhabitants fought an unending battle against damp, smoke, and dirt. Some, with ever-increasing families, had little time to notice their conditions. All waited to be rehoused. The site itself, still strewn with the bricks and rubble left from a bombed school, had also been used as an unofficial dumping ground for refuse of all kinds. (Benjamin, 1961, p.47)

...

The site had always been an eyesore and a cause for very real annoyance. Children used to run wild over the bricks and rubble, they lit fires, threw stones, and fought each other. ‘The ruin’, as it was called locally, was also known and used as an unofficial dumping ground for such items as rusty beds and putrid mattresses. (Benjamin, 1961, p.53)

In the passages above, Benjamin depicts the material conditions of the neighbourhood surrounding Lollard and the playground site at the time it was taken over. Amid pending dislocation, the Committee’s and play workers’ attempts to get local parents and other adult residents to take ownership of the playground were often rebuffed (see Benjamin, 1961; Turner, 1961; Nicholson, 1954; Allen and Nicholson, 1975). Benjamin (1961, p. 53) asserts ‘that this problem is purely a local one, and should not be found on similar playgrounds’. Although Benjamin fails to fully explain his reasoning for why the people living in the area around Lollard should necessarily react differently to the installation of an adventure playground than people living elsewhere, he places a majority of

the blame on the Committee's failure to engage parents and other local (adult) residents in the production of the playground (1961; see 5.3.2).

In a publicity pamphlet published by the Association, Nicholson (1956, p. 4) entreats '[a]s an established concern, the playground will need to increase the number of friends, particularly local people, who can give it their active, personal support'. I argue that community refusal to take ownership of Lollard was likely more complex than Benjamin or members of the Committee asserted (see 5.2.2 and 5.3.2). Framing the disaffection of local (adult) residents to the adventure playground project as being singularly caused by the Committee's exclusionary policies or by the residents supposed lack of social responsibility neglects the role played by the impending dislocation of residents. As Benjamin notes in the above passage, '[t]he houses ... were earmarked for demolition. ... All [of the residents] waited to be rehoused' (1961, p. 47). Moreover, as Turner (1961, pp.25-26) relates, 'The older people, who remember the district when it was more like a village, certainly resent infiltration'. The degree to which anxieties about future dislocation affected residents' willingness to claim ownership of the adventure playground project is unclear; primary source documentation of local (adult) residents' narratives about Lollard were not included in the archives I accessed (see 3.2). Yet Turner's account of Lollard includes several conversations in which residents elide explanations of their own un-involvement with distrust of the Council's actions and motives (1961, pp. 20-21; p.29).

Allen and Nicholson (1975, p.249) recount their engagement in 'site-snatching' in efforts to build up the adventure playground movement: '[i]t took years of site-snatching, money-raising and propaganda before we could begin to prove that it is rewarding to welcome the exuberance of the young'. Beyond the arguably disingenuous manner in which the Committee approached the local (adult) residents surrounding Lollard (see 5.2.2 and 5.3.2), elements of the production of the playground itself can be understood as destructive to the daily lives and material property of the playground's immediate neighbours. This more ordinary, day-to-day damage prematurely dislocated them within their own residences.

An illustration of day-to-day damage might be useful here. The playground 'opened' without fencing, and the illegal dumping of 'rubbish' continued until the erection of fencing a month later (Allen and Nicholson, 1975,

pp.239-240). The clay ‘mountain’ was a source of significant animosity due to its destructiveness (Benjamin, 1961, p.48). Soon after opening, the Committee hoped to vary the topography of the flat site by procuring ‘a dozen lorryloads of topsoil’; it wasn’t until the ‘mountain’ was installed that the Committee realized that they had been given ‘London clay, heavy and sticky’ (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.241). According to Benjamin (1961, p.48), the clay, ‘combined with subsequent rains, played havoc with the children’s clothes’, much to parents’ dismay. Allen and Nicholson (1975, p.241) further note that ‘[t]he clay ... was carried into the neighboring houses’. Killick attempted to contain the mudslide that the mountain generated by building a retaining wall, however, Turner (1961) notes that the wall was largely ineffective, quoting his daily log from more than a year later: “The mountain is creeping and oozing over and round the supporting wall built by my predecessor’ (Turner, 1961, p. 16). Although the Committee was more than aware of the animosity that the mountain generated – ‘discussed at every one of our meetings’ (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p. 249) – it took them more than a year to remove the ‘mud menace’, by which time ‘local goodwill was at the ebb’ (Turner, 1961, p. 22).

These forms of disorder illustrate the mundane ways in which residents experienced the playground; scrubbing sticky children’s clothes and muddy carpets provided a continual reminder of the Committee’s acts of neighbourhood vandalism. The year that it took the Committee to remove the ‘mud menace’ no doubt underlined its disregard for residents’ intimate spaces (their houses) and time (all that scrubbing) in the same way that it had disregarded their time and commitments when scheduling planning meetings. If, for their parents, children’s play activities entered daily life in the form of dirt, it is unsurprising that Lollard was seen as dangerously *out of place*.

### **6.3 (Dis)order**

In this section I examine how inequality was spatially (re)produced at Lollard through contested valuations of how the use of space should be ordered. I take as points of departure Douglas’s (1966) theorization of dirt and disorder – ‘there is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder’ (p. 2) and Kraftl’s (2013) concept of ‘dis/order’ – the ‘interplay between mess and order’ (p. 120). By unpacking the ways that categories of dirt/mess/disorder are

constructed and applied at Lollard, I argue that age- and class-based inequalities of power in post-war England are refracted through the material and temporal boundaries/constraints/order produced and maintained within the playground. I begin by examining how the adults who ran Lollard conceived of creative freedom in relation to children's right to disassemble the built environment and the consequent boundaries erected around activities considered destructive as opposed to deconstructive. Then I turn to a discussion about how control over children's use of space at Lollard was influenced by the aesthetic concerns of adults. Finally, I discuss how adults' attempts to foment ownership identification among the participants at Lollard engendered the erection of spatiotemporal exclusionary zones.

### *6.3.1 Creative Freedom and De(con)struction*

As I discussed in the previous chapter (see 5.3.1), Lollard was conceived as a space in which children could be enabled to manipulate materials in free play – meaning self-chosen play activities (Nicholson, 1956). Freedom, in this context, was not conceived without limits. Instead, children's access to creative freedom was located within a space bounded by the constraints imposed by (adult) society (Kozlovsky, 2013). Geographers and others have argued that the production of spatially bounded child-centric play environments – playgrounds – can act as a form of ghettoization of children by removing them and their play activities from 'the daily life of their communities' (Hart, 2002, p. 153; see also Wood, 1977; Jacobs, 1961). I argue that Lollard was produced specifically to do just that—to remove children from the perceived negative influences of the surrounding community. That is to say, the Committee attempted to influence the social reproduction of the children of Kennington through engaging them in free play within an environment mediated by adults that the Committee considered to be good behavioural models – as opposed to the adults that they would normally interact with. The limits of how free the children playing at Lollard were to creatively manipulate their material surroundings were concretized by the constraints that the Committee and play leaders erected around activities considered destructive.

One of the Committee's primary goals in the production of Lollard was the affordance of opportunities for creative manipulation of the material



environment (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1; MSS.121/AP/3/5/1; Allen and Nicholson, 1975; Nicholson, 1956). In arguing for ‘the need for adaptable materials’, Allen and Nicholson (1975, p. 238), in a typically universalist conception of children, asserted that ‘[c]hildren want, above all, things they can move about and use for all sorts of things’. Similarly, the publicity pamphlet produced by the Association informs that ‘[t]his playground offers them the raw materials – and the freedom to follow their own hunches in finding out what can be made of it’ (Nicholson, 1956, p.3). These two quotes are indicative of the Committee and play leader narratives in general around the importance of materials for self-directed building.

The discourse around the creative use of materials becomes conflicted when applied to the deconstruction of previously manufactured products. The narratives employed by the Committee and play leaders regarding the perceived needs of children for building activities similarly recognize value in demolition activities. Indeed, the Association’s publicity pamphlet advertises that ‘[t]he children build houses and dens; dig, construct and demolish’ (Nicholson, 1956, p.3); to a certain extent, demolition/deconstruction was viewed as part of a continuum of creative manipulation. However, conflicts arose when children’s deconstructive activities took as their material object something that the adults running Lollard had designated for a purpose that they considered more productive. For example, Turner (1961) recounts remonstrating a child for hacking apart a barrel that had been intended to serve as a planter. In another instance, the Committee decided that ‘a fence to keep the children off the beds’ was needed for the garden area (MSS.121/AP/1/1/42). Significantly, both of these attempts to enforce boundaries (whether physical or behavioural) correspond to attempts to improve the aesthetic appearance of the playground (through planting). A hierarchy of productive value, then, gave aesthetic judgments moral urgency.

### *6.3.2 Aesthetic Pressures and the (Mis)use of Space*

Central to the social production of Lollard was the idea that the urban landscape had become too regimented. In a speech delivered in 1954 and reprinted in the *National Froebel Foundation Bulletin* in 1955, Lady Allen questions the effects on children of adult efforts to ‘tidy up’ urban environments,

‘where the planners and architects and those who have control of these places, are, in their great passion for tidiness, in danger of ironing out all the places where children can play’ (MSS.121/AP/7/2/26). Pointing to ‘the relentless hand of tidiness’ and ‘this tide of excessive orderliness’, Allen argues ‘[c]hildren and adolescents who exist in an over-neat adult-made world tend to feel choked and cheated, and rather naturally exert their independence in their struggle to grow up’ (MSS.121/AP/7/2/26). Adventure playgrounds were specifically designed to counter the static play equipment that characterized the sculptural playgrounds that Lady Allen disdainfully referred to as ‘the pride of architects’ (Allen, 1968, p.18). Yet, however much adventure playground advocates supported material mobility, aesthetic inclinations persisted in popular opinion and exerted support for immobility – as evidenced by a 1955 article, ‘New-type Playgrounds are a Big Hit’, that appeared in *The Birmingham Mail* and featured a boastful statement by a Housing Department official that ‘There are no moving parts in any of the things we are designing’ (MSS.121/AP/10/2). Similarly, the adult residents surrounding Lollard continually expressed their desire for ‘a well-laid out playground, with tidy lawns’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/23; Benjamin, 1961; Allen and Nicholson, 1975).

Despite identifying material fluidity as a primary goal of the playground (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1), the Committee’s attempts to ‘order’ the playground through aesthetic pruning and organized activities were continuous (MSS.121/AP/1/1/12; MSS.121/AP/1/1/20; MSS.121/AP/1/1/42; Turner, 1961; Benjamin, 1961), reflecting a pervasive concern with the way the playground was perceived by the public. Kraftl (2013, pp.136-137) points to attempts in alternative learning environments to simultaneously accommodate and manage mess both materially and temporally in order to allow for diverse learning outcomes within the constraints imposed by multiple stakeholders’ interactions with the environments.

The conflict over divergent interpretations of dirt and disorder at Lollard is evident in the Association’s 1956 publicity pamphlet. The pamphlet asserts that the visual attractiveness of the playground is a relative determination: ‘It depends on who is looking at it. People who would like it to be always tidy, and always the same, will be disappointed. Too much is going on’ (Nicholson, 1956, p.3). Furthermore, the ideological struggle over dis/order was not singular to

Lollard. In *Adventure in Play*—a report about the NPFA-sponsored Rathbone Street Adventure Playground in Liverpool—Mays (1957, p.5) depicts the marginal influence of adventure playgrounds in England in the 1950s, calling them ‘more than uncommon’ and stating that ‘[t]hey exist merely on the lunatic fringe of orthodox recreation’. In explanation of this pariah status, Mays posits a breach in material values between adults and children:

All this is due to the wide cleavage between youth and age, childhood and maturity in our culture. Children like disorder or find some invisible order therein. Most adults hate it. Children do not in the least mind being dirty. Most adults abhor it. Children will find a source of enjoyment in the oddest and most unlikely play material: tin cans, milk bottle tops, broken slates, soil, cinders, firewood. The adult mind thinks of these things in terms of refuse and rubbish, and yearns for factory-made toys, areas of level tarmac, swings and roundabouts. (1957, pp. 5-6)

Mays’ point above is evidenced by the preface to *Adventure in Play*, written by Rex Hodges, J.P., Chairman of the Liverpool Council of Social Service. Hodges makes a distinction between ‘the ‘junk’ playground that Mr. Mays has described’ and ‘adventure’ playgrounds’, characterizing ‘adventure’ playgrounds as ‘carefully planned in sections’ – distinctly demarcated areas for permanent apparatus, construction play, and ball games (1957, p.4). Hodges dismisses ‘junk’ playgrounds as disorderly – a quality that he perceives as ‘render[ing] all the more difficult the task of shaping play into a creative thing’ – in opposition to his perception of ‘adventure’ playgrounds as ‘provid[ing] an environmental discipline’ that is helpful to ‘play leaders’ – whose job he characterizes as ‘leading play into constructive channels’ (p.4). Indeed, Hodges notes that the example provided by Mays’ Rathbone Street playground served to convince the Liverpool Council of Social Services to allocate future funding for several play leaders, who would be tasked with running orderly ‘adventure’ playgrounds – in dissonance with the professed ethos of Mays’ ‘junk’ playground (Hodges, 1957, p. 4).

Mays’ theorization of material values (utility versus aesthetic) as being differentiated by age is echoed by Lady Allen (1968, p. 16), who framed the material values of adults and children as being dichotomous: ‘we have to decide whether we are to make playgrounds for children or playgrounds that please the grown-ups’. The Committee’s 1956 Annual Report, presented to the general

membership of the Association by Lady Allen, contrasts the adult residents' desire for an orderly, 'tidy' playground with the 'untidy' result of children's manipulation of loose materials:

In a crowded area like Kennington, the grown-up people long to see a well-laid out playground, with tidy lawns, but the children, who have to be tidy everywhere else, want the opportunities that country children have for climbing, digging and lighting bonfires. The disappointment some people have felt in the look of the playground is to some extent due to the fact that it is designed first and foremost for the pleasure of the children, as a place where they can safely let off steam, use and re-use materials, construct and demolish. All this, to adult eyes, looks untidy. It cannot altogether be avoided; but perhaps the adults will be able to look at it through the eyes of their children. (MSS.121/AP/1/1/23)

While the committee's outline of the differences between children's and adult's attitudes toward tidiness take each category as natural pre-given, these passages illustrate moments in a processing construction of childhood. After all, parents objected to the playground at least partly because they had to clean up after their children – who tracked mud into their living rooms – and launder their clothing. Here the Committee claims to represent children's 'natural' dispositions and desires (as opposed to a specific idealized construction of children) against adults' natural desire for tidy lawns. But this binary construction of ideal children and adults is built on the more mundane temporal and material divides between residents with muddy children and Committee members, 'outsiders' who didn't live beside untidy playgrounds.

As I illustrated earlier (see 5.2.1; 6.2.2), the adult residents of Kennington were, by the mid-1950s, aware that they would be displaced through urban redevelopment schemes (Turner, 1961; Benjamin, 1961). Turner (1961) documents suspicion among local (adult) residents about the operations and motives of non-residents and the L.C.C. (see 5.2.2). As Benjamin (1961, p.53) noted, the Committee did not actively engage the (adult) residents in the production of the playground, nor 'explain the needs of the children or the purpose of the committee in establishing an adventure playground' until over a year after it opened (see 5.3.2). The above passage is indicative of the obliviousness of the Committee—and particularly Lady Allen – in regard to their own affluence relative to many of the local residents. Indeed, Lady Allen suggests in her memoir that an absence of 'a tradition of public service' was to

blame for the paltry local influence within the Committee (Allen and Nicholson, 1975 p.242), rather than structural barriers – including those erected by the Committee, themselves (see 5.2.2). Given this dissonance, it is not surprising that the Committee viewed the clearly articulated (see 5.3.2) aesthetic expectations of (adult) neighbours with frustration (Allen and Nicholson, 1975), while the neighbours reacted to the Committee's efforts with dissatisfaction (Turner, 1961).

Beyond the aesthetic expectations articulated by the (adult) neighbours, the publicity sought by the Committee influenced attempts to control the aesthetic landscape of Lollard. As noted briefly in the previous chapter, the Committee was constituted partly as a promotional body for the idea of adventure playgrounds (see 5.1). The Constitution of the Lollard Adventure Playground Association included among its primary goals 'to enable interested persons to gain first-hand experience of the educational and other advantages provided for children in an adventure playground' (MSS.121/AP/1/1/1). The Committee meeting minutes often include reflections on the level of press attained as well as efforts undertaken to ensure that press reports favoured the playground (MSS.121/AP/1/1/6; MSS.121/AP/1/1/11; MSS.121/AP/1/1/32; MSS.121/AP/1/1/44). Seeking publicity was also a mode by which *the public* was constituted. Local residents were not included. Rather, the public was seen as consisting of the B.B.C., sociologists, charities, government representatives, and other outside individuals and organizations who embodied the 'tradition of public service' that Allen felt was lacking among residents (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.242).

Publicity – what Allen terms 'putting over ideas' (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.130) – was seen by Allen to be fundamentally important to any future growth of the adventure playground idea (Allen and Nicholson, 1975). However, the constant presence of representatives of the press, charities, government, educational institutions, and also unaffiliated visitors created tensions between the Committee and the play leaders, children, and immediate neighbours. At times, the sheer quantity of visitors 'became an interruption for children who were busy about their own affairs' (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.242). For example, Turner (1961) points to the distraction that constant visitors posed to the free play of children on the playground. Furthermore, Turner recounts the accidental offence that one visiting sociologist caused to an immediate neighbour

through an unintentionally condescending compliment. Allen, herself, recalls that '[t]hroughout the experimental period, our relationship with the press was somewhat complex' (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.242). Turner (1961, p.84) points to the conflict caused by publicity seeking:

The press, radio and television have treated us extremely well and we are always glad to supply them with authentic material. All the same it takes a lot of my time and the children – though habituated to publicity and undisturbed by it – should not have their occupations disrupted too often.

The filming of television features became a primary way in which the Committee's commitment to publicity conflicted with their commitment to enabling free play.

The Committee's encouragement of the production of several television features on adventure playgrounds engendered, perversely, periods of enforced performativity among the children playing at Lollard due to the camera crews' need to capture a telegenic form of free play. Appearing in the 1958 edition of (child-authored) *The Lollard Adventure Magazine*, one participant's account of a television news crew visit displays the orchestration behind a filming session:

We had to pretend we was to be looking at the rabbits to make them come out of their hutch and a boy had to go get out the rabbits. [...] When that was over then we all had to go into the street and we had to run in the hut and there was a lot of children there. [...] Mr. Turner went round some of the schools and got some of the children off. (MSS.121/AP/3/5/27)

In a separate event, Turner (1961, p.73) recounts how one boy exiled himself from the playground 'for over a week because I stopped him strumming on the piano while a B.B.C. team were trying to get recordings of the younger children'. The repeated presence of film crews challenges the notion, propagated by Allen (1972, p.8) in *Planning for Play*, that '[i]n [adventure] playgrounds children feel secure in their own domain and are freed from too much adult intrusion in their own affairs'. Instead, the limits of the (child) attenders' actual freedom of expression are embodied through their enrolment in the performance of (adult) filmmakers' recreations of supposed free play.

Beyond enrolling the children who attended Lollard as performers in an on-going publicity campaign, the Committee engaged in visual censorship. Image management operated on two fronts: control of the playground environment itself and control of what visual information was disseminated. The

former was accomplished through commissioned landscaping (MSS.121/AP/1/1/5; MSS.121/AP/1/1/20), organized gardening activities (MSS.121/AP/1/1/13; MSS.121/AP/1/1/42), decorating the hut and clearing debris (Turner, 1961). An example of the later can be found in the Committee meeting minutes of 9 December 1955, which record that ‘[i]t was agreed that the slide dealing with a small boy and a pick-axe be removed from the new film strips’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/16). The degree to which the image of the playground cultivated through the Committee’s publicity efforts diverged from the visual reality of the site is recorded in the 23 March 1956 meeting minutes, which note that ‘several visitors, after seeing the pamphlet [published by the Committee specifically for marketing purposes], were disappointed with the appearance of the playground itself’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/19).

### 6.3.3 ‘Ownership’ and Exclusion

The adults who ran Lollard attempted to foment ownership identification among the (child) participants. That is to say, the Committee and play leaders hoped to engender a ‘sense of ownership’ (Kozlovsky, 2008, p.29). In contrast with the more radical vision of Marie Paneth (1944), a social worker who argued in *Branch Street: A Sociological Study* that ownership of bombsites should literally ‘be given to children: they would become the legal and economic landlords’ (Highmore, 2013, p.331), participant ownership at Lollard was only ever envisioned as symbolically constituted—children as caretakers of a space ultimately owned by adults (the L.C.C. as landlord and the Committee as leasee).

Ownership identification was meant to, as Kozlovsky (2008, p.29) asserts, ‘attach children at risk to the social body’. I argue that the organizers’ attempts to incite feelings of ownership among participants supported material practices that ordered social relations within the playground through the construction of various spatiotemporal exclusionary zones. These exclusionary zones were spaces in which social boundaries were at times erected to protect the play activities of some participants from others.

Lollard occupied ‘an acre and a quarter’ (Allen and Nicholson, 1975, p.238) and by the end of 1956 the playground had a regular attendance of ‘[n]early 300 children’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/29). Less than a year later the ‘The Second Annual Report’ of the Association, delivered in 1957, records a regular

attendance of approximately five hundred children, the vast majority of who were between the ages of ten and sixteen (MSS.121/AP/3/5/26). Often, as Turner (1961) reports, the number of children overwhelmed the materials available, which led to conflicts. The broad age range of participants—from two year olds to boys in their early twenties—often meant that the appropriation of specific spaces at specific times was contested (Turner, 1961).

Access to space and materials was further contested along gender lines. ‘The Second Annual Report’ notes that of participants aged five and above, boys outnumbered girls by a factor of nearly two to one (310 boys to 165 girls) (MSS.121/AP/3/5/26). Turner (1961) observes that participation levels among girls increased with the hiring of a female assistant play leader. However, ownership identification of space at Lollard remained largely segregated, with boys claiming ownership of a workshop erected in 1957 and girls receiving as compensation exclusive rights to a donated caravan (Turner, 1961).

The erection of the workshop is a primary example of the creation of an exclusionary zone at Lollard. Orchestrated by Turner, the prefabricated building was first erected by the older boys, with site clearance provided by younger children of both genders. Following an order by a L.C.C. inspector, the workshop was dismantled and re-erected by hired labour (Turner, 1961, pp.45-55). According to ‘The Second Annual Report’, ‘Its purpose is to make better provision for the older boys who are now coming into the playground’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/26). The installation of the workshop instigated the founding of a ‘workshop committee’ (Turner, 1961, p.85) – also known as the ‘boys’ committee’ (p.168) – that formalized membership through the payment of ‘subscriptions’ (p.56). According to a report produced by the workshop committee – quoted extensively by Turner (1961, pp.56-57) – membership was closed at sixty ‘because we could not cope with any more’. Turner (1961, p.70) notes the exclusion of some children from the workshop through the workshop committee’s reluctance to admit new members or allow non-members to use the space: ‘Looking back, I see I could have made better use of the workshop last winter. Because it was officially under the management of the boys’ committee it was apt to develop a very exclusive atmosphere’ (p.168). The endowed (by Turner) ownership rights of the boys’ committee to the workshop constructed it as an exclusionary zone for girls in particular, as evidenced by a report, written



collectively by six girls and published in the 1958 edition of *The Lollard Adventure Magazine*, that notes that '[t]he boys and the help of some older men built the workshop for boys only. [...] girls cannot go in the workshop. Only boys can' (MSS.121/AP/3/5/27). Thus, Allen's (1960, p.9) assertion that '[t]he young people at Lollard Adventure Playground properly regard it as theirs, for by their labours they have helped to create it' is, perhaps, too broad. As the circumstances of access to the workshop make apparent, *some* (child) participants felt entitled to *some* spaces within the playground, and these ownership identifications were mediated by the inclinations of adults (Turner and other volunteers).

Turner directly enforced spatiotemporal exclusionary zones at Lollard, in keeping with his support for the formalization of playground activities. Following the formation of the workshop committee several other committees emerged, such as the 'garden committee' – comprised of 'boys who are still at school' (Turner, 1961, p.85) – and the 'Girls' Committee' (MSS.121/AP/1/1/53). According to Turner (1961, p. 85), 'The fashion for committees has done good, in all sorts of ways, to the children who are ready to make something of it'. However, for playground participants who were deemed not 'ready', or who were simply not interested in the activities that the committees were engaged in, were rejected from spaces in which committees were meeting. Turner (1961, p. 106) records that on weekday evenings 'we have special sessions and meetings of the various committees, so that the day has more shape and order; and the children who do not want to join whatever is going on are asked to go away'. During the winter months and on rainy days, when indoor space was especially in demand, entrance or exclusion was based not only on interest in proscribed activities but also on characteristics such as age and gender. Recounting a typical winter weekday evening in explanation of 'how our time and space is apportioned', Turner (1961, pp.164-168) demonstrates how spatiotemporal exclusionary zones were often defined and reinforced by himself directly or through delegated responsibility to specific older boys and girls:

For the first hour, or hour and a half, the hut was given over to the younger children between five and ten. [...] generally we had between thirty and forty, reading or running about or playing shops, families and so on in little groups. No one else was allowed in, apart from the half a dozen senior boys—active members of the boy's committee –

who have always been welcome at any time either in the hut or in my office. They can always be trusted to keep an eye on things if there is no adult on the spot; [...] This winter, the same privileges have been given to two or three of the older girls. [...] During the first session, while the hut was occupied by small children, with a sprinkling [sic] of seniors, a number of between-age boys were usually occupied in the workshop, and a few were probably still playing on the rough ground. [...] our voluntary helpers usually arrived between six and six-thirty. On Monday, Miss A. settled down in the hut for the rest of the evening with the 'Magazine Staff,' composed of over thirty children between six and fifteen. On Tuesday, Mr or Mrs M., and sometimes both, came in for an hour's painting and modelling. These sessions were so popular with the ten to fourteens that we had to limit the number to twenty in each group and there was usually a queue outside waiting to take the place of any children who went home. [...] Jiving and snooker are limited to the last hour on Tuesday and Friday and six to eight on Saturday. There are a lot of adolescents who show no interest in anything else and I give them their turn. But it is a constant struggle to stop them encroaching. The moment some other activity dies down they start the gramophone. [...] we had no experts on Thursday, and I made it a special evening for younger children and girls by reserving the hut, first, for the favourite game of 'Libraries': and later for 'Shows' usually based on T.V. programmes or on operettas produced by the magazine group. If this group wanted to rehearse again I cleared the hut for them on Saturday afternoon. [...] On wet days, however, it was often necessary to reduce the numbers in some impromptu and arbitrary way.

As evident in the passage above, Turner's construction of spatiotemporal exclusionary zones was intended as a method of managing the large numbers of children of different ages that congregated within and laid claim to Lollard. Whatever the merits of this management style, Turner, as the adult who ultimately controlled the resources, ordered the playground according to his perceptions of the children's needs. Furthermore, Turner rewarded certain types of behaviour in allowing access to exclusionary zones, as evidenced through his targeted delegation of authority. In the next section, I examine the ways in which adults at Lollard (Turner and Committee members) encouraged activities that they considered productive, and how the adults' valuations of productivity were often tied to potential for publicity and fundraising.

#### **6.4 The factory of the child: social (re)production and the alienated right to play**

In this section I explore material practices of social reproduction at Lollard. Starting from Benjamin's (1961, p.14) observation that early adventure playgrounds were meant to be 'the workshop of the child', I examine the alienation of children's right to play, how children's activities were enrolled in adult projects with adult purposes. One could say then, perhaps, that Lollard can be understood as a factory of the child with a division of labour and control. I have previously discussed how the adult organizers of Lollard hoped to reproduce a strong democratic society through the production of responsible citizens (see 5.3.1). I argue, here, that the participants at Lollard can be understood as a labour force utilized in the production of the larger adventure playground movement and ideas about childhood and properly constituted adult authority. I begin with a discussion about how the Committee and play leaders fostered certain play activities that they deemed to be productive for the purpose of publicity and fund-raising and, by doing so, alienated children's right to play. Then I turn to the enrolment of Lollard (child) participants in the physical expansion of the adventure playground movement.

#### *6.4.1 Productive Play Activities*

Under Turner a wide variety of regular adult-orchestrated activities were introduced, including 'painting and stone carving' (MSS.121/AP/1/1/42), a 'weekly wall-newspaper' and 'magazine' (Turner, 1961, p.37), a regular 'Beauty Session' (p.70), 'sewing bee' (p.39), 'French group' and 'art class' (MSS.121/AP/1/1/53). The high level of demand exhibited by the (child) participants (Turner, 1961) demonstrates that the children evidently found some value and/or enjoyment in these activities. I argue that adult-organized activities – with bounded time limits and a regularized schedule – proliferated on a playground designed for free play, in part, because the production of such activities provided an opportunity for (adult) volunteers to act as behavioural models. In meeting at structured times to write articles or pin curls or hem fabric, the (child) participants were – under the guidance of (adult) volunteers – producing more than just wall newspapers and hairstyles and skirts. Through regular, dependant contact with the volunteers who led the activities, the participants also were producing themselves in the image of their adult guides. Turner (1961, p.70) points to this phenomenon, noting, for example, that the

older girls became very attached to the volunteer who ran the ‘Beauty Session’, and modified their behaviour in a mimetic fashion.

Beyond the activities directly organized by adults, the workshop committee decided to initiate a scheme in which boys would perform repairs and redecorating work for economically distressed pensioners free-of-charge (Turner, 1961). The Committee encouraged the boys to offer their services to a club of ‘old people’ that met regularly in a nearby church hall, noting that ‘[i]f some form of service was undertaken the Playground might be eligible for a Nuffield Grant’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/40). The Committee’s meeting minutes from April 1958 record that the sewing group helped make chair covers for the pensioners scheme, and that the children’s efforts would be used to solicit funds from the Ford Foundation (MSS.121/AP/1/1/44). In a further instance of the Committee utilising the creative labours of (child) participants for the financial gain of the organization, the April 1958 meeting minutes also record that ‘[t]he Committee was pleased to see the gaily painted sign board inscribed with names of supporting bodies. Photographs were to be sent to these bodies’ (MSS.121/AP/1/1/44).

In pointing to these examples, I am not attempting to argue that the Committee’s effort to harness participants’ creative labour was malevolent. Rather, I want to draw attention to the problematic nature of the transaction. While the (child) labourers are enabled by the existence of the playground to partake in activities that they ostensibly find value in and would therefore be seen to benefit from funds received by the Association as a result of their labour, they do not get to control the means of their production in any real way. If the painted sign or the sewn chair covers resulted in a direct influx of funding, (child) individuals who contributed to the production of that profit had no concrete say in how the money was spent, as all finances were controlled by the Committee, on which they had no representation.

#### *6.4.2 Expansion*

Beyond the creative labour contributed by activities within Lollard and the immediate surrounding area, some of the participants at Lollard contributed directly to the expansion of the adventure playground movement. The members of the workshop committee, known as the ‘Heavy Squad’ (MSS.121/AP/3/5/27),

with the encouragement of the Executive Committee (MSS.121/AP/1/1/34), provided physical labour for the production of two other London adventure playgrounds-Triangle Adventure Playground in Kennington and St. John's Wood Adventure Playground (MSS.121/AP/3/5/27; MSS.121/AP/1/1/44; MSS.121/AP/1/1/54).

The labour provided by the members of the workshop committee was in itself part of a larger networking initiative undertaken by Turner, who, according to the Executive Committee minutes, 'hoped to arrange regular monthly meetings of the leaders of London adventure playgrounds for the exchange of ideas, labour and equipment' (MSS.121/AP/1/1/47, see also MSS.121/AP/1/1/54).

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Kozlovsky (2008, p.171) wrote that the basic dilemma marking the history of playgrounds arose from an 'irresolvable contradiction' between the conceptualization of 'play as a biologically inherited drive that is spontaneous, pleasurable, and free' and the rationalization of 'children's play from the outside to advance social, educational, and political goals'. Indeed, the title of the play leader was itself felt to be a contradiction (oxymoron) by several of its bearers. Benjamin (1961, p. 14), for example, described how early adventure playgrounds were meant to provide a space for self-creation – 'the workshop of the child' – and himself resigned over disagreements relating to the rationalization of 'children's play from the outside' (see 5.3.3) (Kozlovsky, 2008, p.171). At Lollard, conflicts emerged between the playground organizers' perceptions of the spatial needs and values of children, the playground users demonstrated wishes, the articulated goals of the adult residents of the area surrounding Lollard, and the aims of some Committee members to utilize the playground (and the children playing there) as a publicity generator for the budding adventure playground movement. As this chapter demonstrated, these conflicts manifested in mundane material and spatial practices – such as attempts to control mud – that in fact were influenced by a network of enmeshed forces.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1 Overview of findings

Lollard was a gathering-place. It was not only a space where children came together to play and adults came to supervise and photograph them, however. Lollard was also a project: a gathering of people, of materials and ideals about the past and its relation to utopian futures, of contests about belonging (us versus them), about what constituted a properly arranged park and about social pathologies and forms of responsibility; it was a hub of activity, a site around which the activities of a host of others (city planners, play workers, newspaper reporters, and so forth) were gathered.

Building Lollard was not only a matter of setting aside a space for children and materials. It was also a matter of producing ideas about childhood and adults and making those ideas persuasive. A primary intention of Lollard's founding was to foster widespread support for the idea that English children were deprived of opportunities for 'moral' and physical growth, particularly in urban areas, and that this deficit could be corrected by providing them with opportunities for a specific sort of play. This play centrally involved the creative manipulation of the physical environment under the supervision of the right sort of adults. The absence of these opportunities was held out as a major cause of delinquent behaviour. This thesis examined how Lollard's organizers' ability to offer these freedoms of choice and active engagements was shaped by wider concerns and situated relations of class.

A primary rationale for the formalization of the child-appropriated bomb-site into the adult-appropriated child-centric play environment was – and still is – the argument that in urban areas children are not able to control space in such a way as to enable the undertaking of creative projects that last over a period of days or weeks or months. That is to say, the limits of children's authority within an adult-centric structure of property rights would necessitate the benevolent demarcation of land on which children can extend their spatiotemporal appropriation for productive creativity. However, Lollard demonstrates that the Committee's ability to offer children there actual freedom to engage with their surroundings was frequently limited by concerns about the

visual imagery (disorder) that such freedom tended to produce. Likewise, the Committee's focus on eliciting publicity for the abstract 'idea' of adventure playgrounds in the hope of growing a larger adventure playground movement frequently translated into concrete spatial and material practices that ordered the use of space within the playground according to adult preferences.

Kraftl has shown how everyday, 'seemingly banal' material practices 'are enrolled in, and constitutive of, more pervasive, more-or-less coherent notions of childhood' (2006, p.501). The point that I want to emphasize is that in the process of adults *constructing childhood* through the *production of child-centric spaces*, these same material practices refract concomitant assumptions about children, as such, and adults' superiority to them. At the same time, existing inequalities of economic and political influence among adults may be reproduced and amplified through the process of transforming public space into child-centric space. Individuals and groups able to harness pre-existing affluence in the production of child-centric environments are able to shape the construction of 'ideal childhood'. They do not, however, make it exactly as they choose. Their actions are also shaped by interactions and relations with parents and children and, even, mounds of dirt. Controlling what is considered 'best practice' in relation to children (and the spaces in which they spend their time), powerful parties (whether by virtue of class or race or professional title) depend on the borrowed authority of institutions and discourses of psychology and deviance.

The conflicts about children that emerged during the building of Lollard serve as a reminder that it is difficult to map out geographies of childhood without encountering claims about childhood, play, rights, and so forth – seemingly abstract categories. This thesis has explored Lollard's growth out of spatially localized and very far-flung connection which chained together projects concerning children, urban planning, and the transformation of war-time memory, among other things. Abstract-seeming categories of childhood and rights were at the centre of the construction of Lollard; yet these were not constructed abstractly. This thesis examined the reconstruction of children as an object of knowledge, intervention and debate through the 'practical experiment' undertaken at Lollard. This 'experiment' gathered together the diverging interests and perspectives of parents, Committee members, journalists, park commissioners, city planners and others – all appealing to universal ideas and

ideals about children – around the ‘right of the child to play’. By examining how the practical work of constructing Lollard to afford this ‘right’ engaged wider debates and pre-existing social relations, this thesis also examined continuities, which a singular focus on the site as a ‘social’ experiment or on the novelty of ‘adventure playgrounds’ risk ignoring.

This thesis attempts to introduce adventure playgrounds as important sites of research for addressing on-going debates in the subfield of Children’s Geographies. As spaces that adults often explicitly approach/produce with ideological impetus, ‘adventure playgrounds’ can be understood as reflecting the often conflicting values that ‘progressive’ adults enact regarding childhood, social control, and young people’s free expression through the creative appropriation of space. By troubling the existing narrative of the early adventure playground movement in England, this thesis draws attention to the problematic ways in which adult producers of spaces for children—motivated by universalizing rhetoric about children’s inherent ‘right to play’ and participation—risk reproducing spatial inequalities along age and class lines. Moving beyond the debate that has largely dominated theory expansion in Children’s Geographies, that of ‘being’ and/or ‘becoming’, this thesis contributes to the subfield, primarily, by demonstrating how attention to the material production of ‘adventure playgrounds’ presents a fertile (and largely neglected) domain for theorizing the role of adults in relation to the play activities of young people. Specifically, future research might seek to better understand how the social production and construction of such playgrounds occurs within different times and locations, for example, through a comparative study of the contemporaneous American playground The Yard in Minneapolis, MN, or through the study of contemporary adventure playgrounds in comparative urban settings – with local residents facing uprooting through gentrification. Moreover, by drawing attention to two underutilized archive collections related to adult-led movements around children’s spatial access, this thesis adds to—and hopefully stimulates—a growing body of literature related to ‘critical geographies of the present’. Artifacts of the mid-Twentieth Century tend not to be classed as objects of serious historical study, and yet are removed from the ‘in-motion’ experience of most contemporary geographic research. However, it is vital that geographers attempting to understand the role of adult-produced



spaces in the lives of contemporary young people can critically untangle the processes through which such spaces have been formed over time.

**ARCHIVE REFERENCES****Lady Allen of Hurtwood Archive**

Lady Allen of Hurtwood Papers (MSS.121), Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick.

*MSS.121/AP/1/1/1-71: The Lollard Adventure Playground Association [APA]: administrative records*

MSS.121/AP/1/1/1: Undated, Constitution

MSS.121/AP/1/1/2: 2 December 1954, Signed minutes.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/5: 3 February 1955, Signed minutes

MSS.121/AP/1/1/6: 3 March 1955, Signed minutes

MSS.121/AP/1/1/9: 5 May 1955, Signed minutes.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/11: 30 June 1955, Signed minutes

MSS.121/AP/1/1/12: 21 July 1955, Signed minutes

MSS.121/AP/1/1/13: 28 September 1955, Signed minutes.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/16: 9 December 1955, Signed minutes.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/18: 9 March 1956, Signed minutes

MSS.121/AP/1/1/19: 23 March 1956, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/20: 11 April 1956, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/23: 7 June 1956, Signed minutes of 1st annual general meeting.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/24: 29 June 1956, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/28: 12 November 1956, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/29: 10 December 1956, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/32: 18 March 1957, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/33: 7 May 1957, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/34: 3 June 1957, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/40: 11 November 1957, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/42: 27 January 1958, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS. 121/AP/1/1/43: 3 March 1958, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/44: 14 April 1958, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/47: 10 July 1958, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/48: 18 August 1958, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/50: 13 October 1958, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/51: 17 November 1958, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/53: 17 January 1959, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/54: 16 February 1959, Signed minutes of executive committee.

MSS.121/AP/1/1/58: 8 June 1959, Signed minutes of executive committee.

*MSS.121/AP/3/5/1-31: Adventure Playground Subject Files: Lollard Adventure Playground Association [1953-1960]*

MSS.121/AP/3/5/1: January 1953, 'Suggestions for converting part of Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, into a waste materials Experimental Playground' by Lady Allen of Hurtwood.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/2: 28 January, 1953, Letter from the Clerk of the L.C.C., Sir Howard Roberts, to Lady Allen of Hurtwood.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/3: 27 February 1953, Letter from John Brown, Education Officer of the L.C.C., to Lady Allen of Hurtwood.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/4: 1 May 1953, Letter from the Assistant Education Officer of the L.C.C. to Lady Allen of Hurtwood.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/5: 29 July 1953, Letter from Lady Allen of Hurtwood to the Clerk of the L.C.C., Sir Howard Roberts.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/6: 6 August 1953, Letter from Sir Howard Roberts, Clerk of the L.C.C., to Lady Allen of Hurtwood.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/7: 14 September 1954, Letter from the Education Officer of the London County Council to Lady Allen of Hurtwood.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/9: 4 October 1954, Letter from John Brown, Education Officer of the L.C.C., to Lady Allen of Hurtwood.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/10: Undated, 'Details of the Lollard Adventure Playground'.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/12: Undated, 'Lollard Street Adventure Playground'.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/14: Undated, 'Memorandum on the Lollard Adventure Playground: For the consideration of the Trustees of the City Parochial Trust'.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/23: 17 November 1955, 'Lease of Lollard Street School site, Lollard Street, Lambeth, in the County of London'.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/25: Undated, 'Lollard Adventure Magazine [1(1)]'.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/26: 31 March 1957, Lollard Adventure Playground Association, Second Annual Report and Accounts.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/27: May 1958, 'The Lollard Adventure Magazine [1(2)]'.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/28: 31 March 1959, Lollard Adventure Playground Association, Fourth Annual Report and Accounts.

MSS.121/AP/3/5/30: Undated, 'The End of a Great Adventure'.

*MSS.121/AP/7/1/31:*

Sandilands, C. 1955. I visit the Lollard Adventure Playground, *Illustrated*. 26 November.

*MSS.121/AP/7/2/1-47: Text of articles and addresses on play facilities, including adventure playgrounds [1934-1970]*

MSS.121/AP/7/2/22:

Allen, M. 1946. Why Not Use Our Bomb Sites Like This? *Picture Post*. 16 November, pp.26-29.

MSS.121/AP/7/2/26:

Allen, M. 1954. Adventure playgrounds. In: National Froebel Foundation. 1955. Bulletin. 97, December.

*MSS.121/AP/10/2: Lollard Adventure Playground Association Press cutting album, May 1955 to July 1957*

Jesney, G. 1955. Adventure Playfield An eyesore: scrap it. *Northhamptonshire Evening Telegraph*. 1 September.

Anon. 1955. New-type playgrounds are a big hit. *The Birmingham Mail*. 27 August.

**Donne buck archive**

The Donne Buck Archive, hosted by the Children's Play Information Service at the National Children's Bureau.

**9/3**

Buck, D. J. 1965. The Relevance of an adventure playground to the study of juvenile delinquency. [Report]. New York: The Ford Foundation.

## References

- Abercrombie, P. 1943. Some Aspects of the County of London Plan. *The Geographical Journal*. **102**(5/6), pp.227-238.
- Aitken, S. and Herman, T. 2010. Gender, Power and Crib Geography: Transitional spaces and potential places. *Gender, Place, & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*. **4**(1), pp.63-88.
- Aitken, S. 2001. Global crises of childhood: rights, justice, and the unchildlike child. *Area*. **33**(2), pp.119-127.
- Allen, M. and Nicholson, M. 1975. *Memoirs of an Uneducated Lady: Lady Allen of Hurtwood*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Allen, M. 1972. Forward. In: Bengtsson, A. *Adventure Playgrounds*. London: Crosby Lockwood, pp.8-10.
- Allen, M. 1960. Untitled. In: National Playing Fields Association (NFPA). *Adventure Playgrounds*. London: NFPA, pp.9-11.
- Allen, M. and Wilson, H. 1957. Adventure Playgrounds. *The Times*. 19 July, p.11.
- Anon. 1957. Success of Social Experiment. *The Times*. 27 September, p.13.
- Anon. 1955. Sports Ground as Memorial. *The Times*. 4 May, p.7
- Anon. 1953. Encouraging 'Junk' Playgrounds. *The Times*. 7 October, p.4.
- Archives Hub. 2009. *Lady Allen of Hurtwood Papers*. [Online]. [16 January 2014]. Available from: <http://archiveshub.ac.uk>
- Argenti, N. 2001. Kesum-Body and the Places of the Gods: The Politics of Children's Masking and Second-World Realities in Oku (Cameroon). *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. **7**(1), pp. 67-94.
- Bartlett, S. 2005. Integrating Children's Rights into Municipal Action: A review of Progress and Lessons Learned. *Children, Youth and Environments*. **15**(2), pp.18-40.
- Benjamin, J. 1961. *In Search of Adventure: A Study of the Junk Playground*. London: National Council of Social Service.
- Bengtsson, A. 1972. *Adventure Playgrounds*. London: Crosby Lockwood.
- Bertelsen, J. 1972. Early experience from Emdrup. In: Bengtsson, A. 1972. *Adventure Playgrounds*. London: Crosby Lockwood, pp.16-23.
- Beskine, S. 1961. Adventure in Lollard Street. *Anarchy*. **7**, pp.204-213.

- Beunderman, J., Hannon, C., & Bradwell, P. 2007. *Seen and Heard: Reclaiming the public realm with children and young people*. London: Demos.
- Black, I. S. 2010. Analysing Historical and Archival Sources. In: Cliffords, N., French, S., and Valentine, G. (ed). 2010. *Key Methods in Geography*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: SAGE.
- Buckingham, D. 2011. *The Material Child: Growing Up in Consumer Culture*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Children's Play Information Service (CPIS). 2009. *Donne Buck Collection: Background*. [Online]. [Accessed 16 January 2014]. Available from: <http://www.ncb.org.uk>.
- Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). 2013. General comment No. 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (art. 31), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. [Online]. [Accessed on 23 December 2013]. Available from: [www2.ohchr.org](http://www2.ohchr.org)
- Cranwell, K. A. 2009. Adventure Playgrounds. In: Carlisle, R. P. (ed.). *Encyclopaedia of Play in Today's Society*, Vol. 1. London: SAGE Publications.
- Cranwell, K. 2003. Towards a History of Adventure Playgrounds 1931-2000, In: Norman, N. (ed.). *An Architecture of Play: A survey of London's adventure playgrounds*. London: Four Corners Books, pp. 17-25.
- Conway, M. 2009a. *Developing an adventure playground: the essential elements*. [Online]. London: National Children's Bureau. [4 October 2013]. Available from: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/112552/pathfinder-adventure-playground-briefing.pdf>
- Conway, M. 2009b. What's in a name: adventure playground or adventure play park? *PlayToday*. [Online]. 66: 12-13. [5 October 2013]. Available from: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/221347/play-today-66.pdf>
- Crow, J. 2007. *Jimmy's Lambeth*. [Online]. [15 August 2007]. [9 May 2014]. Available from: <http://jimmyslambeth.blogspot.co.uk/>
- Crump, J. R. 1999. What cannot be seen will not be heard: The production of landscape in Moline, Illinois. *Ecumene*, 6(3), pp.295-317.

- Cunningham, H. 2006. *The Invention of Childhood*. London: BBC Books.
- Curtis, A. 2008. OMEP-sixty years on. *International Journal of Early Childhood*. **40**(2), pp.139-144.
- DCSF. 2008. *Fair Play: A consultation on the play strategy*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- Doll & Lefavre, L. 2007. *Ground-up City: Play as a design tool*. Rotterdam: 010.
- Douglas, M. 1986. *How Institutions Think*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Fjørtoft, I. and Sageie, J. 2000. The natural environment as a playground for children: Landscape description and analyses of a natural playscape. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, **48**, pp.83-97.
- Forshaw, J. H. and Abercrombie, P. 1943. *County of London Plan*. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd.
- Frost, J. L. 2010. *A History of Children's Play and Play Environments: Towards a contemporary child-saving movement*. New York: Routledge.
- Frost, J. L. 1992. *Play and Playscapes*. Albany, New York: Delmar.
- Gadda, A. 2008. Rights, Foucault and Power: A Critical Analysis of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Sociology*. **31**.
- Gagen, E. A. 2007. Reflections of Primitivism: Development, Progress and Civilization in Imperial America, 1898-1914. *Children's Geographies*. **5**(1-2), pp.16-27.
- Gagen, E. 2001. Too Good to be True: Representing Children's Agency in the Archives of Playground Reform. *Historical Geography*. **29**, pp.53-64.
- Golding, W. 1954. *Lord of the Flies*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Graeber, D. 2014. What's the Point if we Can't Have Fun? *The Baffler*. 24. [Online] [25 August 2014]. Available from: <http://www.thebaffler.com/salvos/whats-the-point-if-we-cant-have-fun>
- Gruenewald, D. A. 2003. Foundations of Place: A Multidisciplinary Framework for Place-Conscious Education. *American Educational Research Journal*. **40**(3), pp.619-654.



- Harewood House. 2014. Adventure Playground. [Online]. [Retrieved 23 June 2014]. Available from: <http://harewood.org/explore/gardens-and-grounds/adventure-playground/>
- Hart, R. 1997. *Children's participation: the theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care*. New York, UNICEF.
- Hart, R. 1992. Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship. *UNICEF Innocenti Essays*. 4. Florence, Italy: UNICEF/International Child Development Centre.
- Harvey, D. 2008. The Right to the City. *New Left Review*. 53, pp.23-40.
- Hendrick, H. 1997. Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present. In: James, A. and Prout, A. (eds.). *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*. London: Falmer Press: pp.33-60.
- Highmore, B. 2013. Playgrounds and Bombsites: Postwar Britain's Ruined Landscapes. *Cultural Politics*. 9(3), pp.323-336.
- Hodges, R. 1957. Preface. In: Mays, J. B. *Adventure in Play: The Story of Rathbone Street Adventure Playground*. Liverpool: Liverpool Council of Social Services, pp.3-4.
- Horton, J. and Kraftl, P. 2009. What (else) matters? Policy contexts, emotional geographies. *Environment and Planning A*. 41(12), pp.2984-3002.
- Horton, J., Kraftl, P. & Tucker, F. 2008. The challenges of 'Children's Geographies': a reaffirmation. *Children's Geographies*. 6(4), pp.335-348.
- Howell, O. 2008. Skatepark as Neoliberal Playground. *Space and Culture*. 11(4), pp.475-496.
- Huizinga, J. 1949. *Homo Ludens*. Taylor & Francis.
- Katz, C. 2004. *Growing up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Katz, C. 2001a. Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction. *Antipode*. 33, pp.709-728.
- Katz, C. 2001b. The State Goes Home: Local Hyper-Vigilance of Children and the Global Retreat from Social Reproduction. *Social Justice*. 28(3), pp.47-56.

- Kozlovsky, R. 2013. *The Architectures of Childhood: Children, Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Postwar England*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.
- Kozlovsky, R. 2008. Adventure Playgrounds and Postwar Reconstruction. In: *Designing Modern Childhood: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children: An International Reader*, Gutman, M. and de Conink-Smith, N., eds. Rutgers University Press.
- Kraftl, P. 2013. *Geographies of Alternative Education*. Bristol: Policy Press
- Kraftl, P. 2009. Utopia, Childhood and Intention. *Journal of Cultural Research*, **13**(1), pp.69-88.
- Kraftl, P. 2006. Building an Idea: The Material Construction of an Ideal Childhood, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **31**(4), pp.488-504.
- L'Eplattenier, B. E. 2009. An Argument for Archival Research Methods: Thinking Beyond Methodology. *College English*, 72(1): 67-79.
- Lester, S. & Russell, W. 2010. Children's right to play: An examination of the importance of play in the lives of children worldwide, *Working Papers in Early Childhood Development*, **57**. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.
- Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. Oxford: Blackwell.
- LeVine, R. 2007. Ethnographic Studies of Childhood: A Historical Overview. In Bluebond-Langner, M. and Korbin, J., eds. 2007. In Focus: Children, Childhood, and Childhood Studies. *American Anthropologist*. 109(2), pp.247-260.
- Low, S. 2000. *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Low, S. 1996. Spatializing Culture: The Social Production and Social Construction of Public Space in Costa Rica. *American Ethnologist*. **23**(4), pp.861-879.
- Mays, J. B. 1957. *Adventure in Play: The Story of Rathbone Street Adventure Playground*. Liverpool: Liverpool Council of Social Services.

- Mercer, C. (2002) Deconstructing development: the discourse of maendeleo and the politics of women's participation on Mount Kilimanjaro. *Development and Change*. **33**(1), pp.101-127.
- Mills, S. 2013a. 'An instruction in good citizenship': scouting and the historical geographies of citizenship education, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38: 120-134.
- Mills, S. 2013b. Cultural Historical Geographies of the Archive: Fragments, Objects and Ghosts, *Geography Compass*, 7(10): 701-713.
- Ministry of Education (MoE). 1948. *Out of School: The Second Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Donne Buck Archive at the Children's Information Service, 10.9.
- Mitchell, D. 1996. *The lie of the land: migrant workers and the California landscape*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mitchell, D. 1994. Landscape and Surplus Value: the making of the ordinary in Brentwood, California, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 12.
- Mohan, G. and Stokke, K. 2000. Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism. *Third World Quarterly*. **21**(2), pp.247-268.
- Moreau, T. and Alderman, D. H. 2011. Graffiti Hurts and the Eradication of Alternative Landscape Expression. *The Geographical Review*, 101 (1): 106-124.
- Murdoch, G. P. 1943. Bronislaw Malinowski. *American Anthropologist*, 45:441-451.
- Nicholson, M. 1960. Lollard Street Adventure Playground. In National Playing Fields Association (NFPA). 1960. *Adventure Playgrounds*. London: NFPA, p. 5-8.
- Nicholson, M. 1956. *Lollard Adventure Playground*. London: Lollard Adventure Playground Association.
- Norman, N. 2005. Pockets of disorder: The history of adventure play. [Online]. *City Projects*. [Accessed 3 November 2013]. Available from: <http://www.cityprojects.org/>
- Norman, N. 2003. *An Architecture of Play: A survey of London's adventure playgrounds*. London: Four Corners Books.

- Nuffield Foundation. 2002. *The Advancement of Social Well-being, by Research and Practical Experience: Annual Review*. Nuffield Foundation.
- Paneth, M. 1944. *Branch Street: A Sociological Study*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Play England. 2011. Government to discontinue national play contracts. [Online]. [Accessed 18 February 2014]. Available from:  
<http://www.playengland.org.uk/news>
- Play England. 2010. Play England begins formal consultation with staff. [Online]. [Accessed 18 February 2014]. Available from:  
<http://www.playengland.org.uk/news/>
- Play England. 2009. *Policy Summary: The Play Strategy*. London: National Children's Bureau.
- Play Wales. n.d. *Adventure Playgrounds, Play Wales*. [Online]. [Accessed 31 December 2013]. Available from:  
<http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/adventureplaygrounds>
- Porter, R. 1994. *London: A Social History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Prout, A. 2005. *The Future of Childhood: Towards the interdisciplinary study of children*. New York and London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Ramsey, D. 2012. *The Land Adventure Playground*. [Online]. [7 July 2014]. Available from:  
<http://playgroundadventureuk.wordpress.com/2012/07/22/i-drove-to-wrex/>
- Rosen, D. 2007. Child Soldiers, International Humanitarian Law, and the Globalization of Childhood, *American Anthropologist*, 109(2): 296-306.
- Rosen, D. 2005. *Armies of the Young: Child Soldiers in War and Terrorism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Scott, J. C. 2012. *Two Cheers For Anarchism: Six easy pieces on autonomy, Dignity, and meaningful work and play*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Shier, H. 1984. *Adventure Playgrounds: An introduction*. London: National Playing Fields Association.

- Stasch, R. 2011. Textual Iconicity and the Primitivist Cosmos: Chronotopes of Desire in Travel Writing about Korowai of West Papua. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*. **21**(1), pp.1-21.
- Stoler, A. L. 2009. *Along to Archival Grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Tallon, A. 2010. *Urban Regeneration in the UK*. New York: Routledge.
- Tambiah, S. J. 1996. *Leveling crowds: Ethnonationalist conflicts and collective violence in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Turner, H. S. 1961. *Something Extraordinary*. London: Michael Joseph Ltd.
- Valentine, G. 1996. Angels and devils: moral landscapes of childhood. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. **14**: pp.581-599.
- Vanderbeck, R. 2008. Reaching critical mass? Theory, politics, and the culture of debate in children's geographies. *Area*. **40**(3): pp.393-400.
- Ward, C. 1961. Adventure Playground: A Parable of Anarchy. *Anarchy*. **7**. London: Freedom Press.
- Williams, B. 2006. The Paradox of Parks. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. **13**: pp.139-171.
- Wood, D. 1977. Free the Children! Down with Playgrounds! *McGill Journal of Education*. **12**(2): pp.227-242.
- Wootton, B. 1959. *Social Science and Social Pathology*. Oxford: Macmillan.

**Abbreviations**

CPIS	Children's Play Information Service
MOE	Ministry of Education
MRC	Modern Records Centre
NCB	National Children's Bureau
NPFA	National Playing Fields Association
OMEP	World Organization for Early Childhood Education

