

M.A. in Material and Visual Culture Dissertation

**Constructing the “Natural” Child: The Materiality of Play, Power and Subversion at
Evergreen Adventure Playground**

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For Mum and Dad, for everything.

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Literature Review

Theorists of childhood and play have speculated upon the methods and meanings of play, in so doing constructing concepts such as “natural development”, “free play” and “play deprivation”. Adventure playgrounds have long been associated with an ideal of childhood that is conceptualized as explicitly nostalgic and "natural", providing children with opportunities for “free” play, marked out by adults for its physical, explorative and experimental qualities. Through the design and management of playgrounds play workers have established a set of spatial and material conditions designed explicitly to promote their vision of the “natural” or idealized child and childhood. In privileging certain bodily disciplines while marginalizing others, play workers create a structure of power onsite which individual children must repeatedly engage and negotiate with. Den spaces, charged with issues of privacy and surveillance, provide an entry point for a study of the materiality of these negotiations. Employing a mixture of archaeological mapping and qualitative interviewing techniques we can examine the means by which the children construct their own “selves” within the framework of Evergreen, and how these subjectivities can be both accommodated by and subversive of the adults’ social and material ordering systems.

Children, if defined in the barest of terms as "young humans", are present in all societies. All humans are, at some point, physically juvenile. However, like other "universal biological states", childhood can and must be problematized as socially constructed in time and place. The study of children's transformation into adults was pioneered by developmental theorist Jean Piaget (1952), whose age-related steps offer an arguably universal, biological, guideline of the process through which the child becomes "acculturated". Piaget's child is an incomplete human, a pre- or proto-adult whose play activities are trial-and-error attempts to understand his or her environment. Following his work, many recent studies have predicated themselves on the neurological, biological, social or creative development of children, often naturalizing stages as "part of childhood" and categorizing the ways in which adult society inhibits the individual child's progress through them. Examining play as much as childhood, these theorists privilege "free play" activities, or participatory, physical playful activities unguided by adults.

Parallel to this tradition is that sparked by Phillippe Aries's (1962) proposal of the "child" as a historical concept. By denaturalizing childhood as a biological and social condition he demonstrated how widely held modern associations of childhood with adult nostalgia, purity and vulnerability are recent and created, arguing that even if the state of being a child is not new, understandings of the child and of childhood are culturally specific. James, Jenks and Prout's 1998 study of traditions in childhood theory demonstrates how adult conceptions of children are predicated on their state as "less than" adults, presuming a state of "becoming" rather than "being" as pervasive of their mentalities and activities. Instead of a close examination of children's individual views or actions we have instead a burden of adult society's anxieties and ideals which the category of "child" has long carried.

Adult society is both deeply invested and implicated in the raising of children. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is credited as the first to explicitly describe childhood as a state of "purity" in his 1759 novel *Emile*, transforming the "empty vessel" of the child into something noble, *l'enfant sauvage*, and superior to its adult counterpart. This idea of childhood as a pre-lapsarian state implicated the process sociologists termed "acculturation" as, by logical necessity, one of corruption. This idea was echoed by Gaston Bachelard (1960) and theorists throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Cohen 1987; James et al 1998). This idea of the child as both source and container of adult ideas of "innocence" and moral "purity" remains with us today, though shifted in discourse towards a fear of "lost" or "stolen" childhoods (meaning the "premature" foisting of adult concerns onto juveniles) and lies beneath public concerns over children's vulnerability.

In the widespread disillusionment following the Second World War, however, a shift in the understanding of what might be termed "human nature" sparked new ideas in the "natures" of children. Those who were viewed as inherently "good" could now be seen as, following in traditions of Adamic original sin, "demonic, (as) harbourers of potentially dark forces which risk being mobilized if, by dereliction or inattention, the adult world allows them to veer away from the "straight and narrow" path that civilization has bequeathed to them" (James et al 1998: 10). Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is an excellent example of this, depicting boys as bodily carriers of violent impulses, which bloomed in bloody destruction in the absence of adult constraints. In recent years media coverage has examined at length such acts of youth violence as the school

shootings in at Columbine and elsewhere, and the Jamie Bulger case, each time investigating the killer's personal history for "clues" as to their mental state, their capacity for cruelty.

Even outside of these notions of "good" and "evil" children, childhood is sometimes seen as a time of inherent anarchy (James et al 1998: 11), simply through its association with play. Play has historically been viewed as sinful, or simply a "waste of time" (Aries 1962; Cohen 1987). Today, hidden beneath the discourse of "natural development" through play one can see the desire to justify its usefulness and purpose for the adult that the child will become, validating it as "children's work" (Cohen 1987). However, another body of literature, regarding what James et al termed the "tribal" child, began with Opie and Opie's 1969 ethnography of the seemingly autonomous "culture" of childhood and play. This dramatically relocated the researcher's focus onto the children themselves, their methods and means of cultural production. However, in stressing the "separateness" of children's culture this approach loses the connections between children's worlds and the wider context of the adult-determined landscape in which they live. The effects of this upon children's freedoms of movement, activity and association have been addressed primarily by developmental theorists.

Social, cognitive, physical, creative and emotional developmental theorists have argued specific social concerns, such as juvenile obesity, ADHD, racism, apathy and social withdrawal (Sutton-Smith, 1997; Caseberry, 1998; Hartup, 1978), "excessive" fears or phobias, delinquency (Pellegrini and Smith, 1998) as "youth problems". They have theorized that children's exposure to such modern urban conditions as busy roads and fears for safety has resulted in their widespread cloistering within the private sphere (Jones and Cunningham 1999; Barker and Weller 2003; Gill 2005), resulting in "play deprivation". Having coined the phrase 'battery children', Schweinhart and Weikart identify play deprivation symptoms as aggression, excessive whining, emotional and social repression, poor academic achievement and higher rates of obesity. Children's increased consumption of "junk foods" has led to concerns that this "play deprivation" reduces the child's ability to disperse social and bodily "poisons" through "healthy, normal" outdoors play activity. These problematic urges are both internal (such as "innate" aggressive tendencies) and environmental.

Strathern's interpretations of ethnographical work (1999) on "fat babies" can be of use here. While fat newborns in New Guinea were seen as "hoarding" the "life force", modern Western obese children are arguably viewed as bloated carriers of societal poisons (Fenton, Gill). The dispersal of these toxins renders the corporeal child "lean" of them or, alternatively, "natural" and "healthy" once again. In medical history, Armstrong (1986) theorized such medical crises as infant mortality as social inventions, demonstrating how a specific set of circumstances resulted in pre-existing events being codified in the public (and governmental) imagination. The "problems" of youth and of young bodies can thus be understood as socially constructed.

“Free” play has long been lauded as, if not a panacea, then as a counter-agent for what are commonly viewed as the problems of the modern age (Bertelson 1943; Allen of Hurtwood 1972; Hughes 1990; Sleek 1998; Gill 2005 and many more). This concern for children's personal, social, emotional and physical development in a hostile modern world was at the heart of the creation of the first known adventure playground, in Emdrup, outside Copenhagen during the German occupation in 1943, where the drive for a 'safe' location for children to play was spurred on by concerns that children were being targeted and even shot by occupying troops (Bertelson 1943). Essentially a location of bomb site rubble, Emdrup encouraged children to construct their own material and social environments under the loosest of adult supervision. One visitor to the site was Lady Allen of Hurtwood, who became adventure playgrounds' first, and perhaps most strident, English-language advocate. She defended "free" play as a means of preserving children's "inherent curiosity and gaiety" (Allen of Hurtwood 1968:11) and, blaming the implacable and "unforgiving" modern urban landscape for this process, she went on to assert that "not all the so-called 'youth problems' are the fault of the young" (ibid:15) .

"Junk" or "Adventure" playgrounds (as they were renamed by campaigners in subsequent publicity materials) have so far enjoyed two particular periods of interest. The first was pioneered by Lady Allen, who suggested that as children all over Europe were playing unsupervised in abandoned bomb sites with the rubble they found there their play might be rendered less dangerous if separate space was allocated, appropriate supervisors found and the more hazardous elements removed from the loose parts provided (broken glass, razor wire, etc.), saying "why not make some of (these bomb sites) safe places to play in?" (Quoted in Bengtsson

1972:17). However, by deliberately negating both the physically and conceptually hazardous qualities of the original sites, and by establishing adult supervisors, "adventure play" advocates were in fact constructing new sites of limited freedom. In doing so they brought liminal societal members (the children) back into a secured central location, supplied with adults who established opening and closing hours, and vetted all materials to enter and leave the site. These changes, and others, were made deliberately to perpetuate the creation of specific kinds of children and childhoods, to encourage behaviour that adults thought "appropriate" and limit or exclude others, to create opportunities for specific learned bodily disciplines and subjectivities to be created".

When children began playing in bombed-out East End lots, they were engaged in a child-led experimental exploration of the abandoned fringes of their urban environment. Unshaped and unmonitored by adults, these children were establishing places of their own outside of the adult structures of home, school, etc., that had previously defined their activities and material environments. These bomb sites, these abrupt and violent ruins, can be seen as places of subversive potential both socially and materially. Edensor argued that closed industrial sites, in ruination, "are dropped from (the) stabilizing networks" (Edensor 2005:313) of systematic ordering that comprise and compose our worlds, and the same can be said of bomb sites. These sites of destroyed familiarity, of the buildings of daily life which had been violently collapsed, provided children with an opportunity to escape, "rebuke" and "interrogate" the "normative processes of spatial and material ordering" (Edensor 2005:314).

As its most junior members, children occupy a liminal place (or, practically speaking, "no place") in adult society, and lack the political power to change their circumstances. Excluded from the public sphere in a myriad of ways, anxiety over what children might do (or what might be done to them) if left unattended or uncontrolled have proliferated in popular discourse. That children should use their time, and their play, not to pursue full membership of the adult sphere but instead to create their own world outside of it was viewed as highly dangerous by many adults. This, combined with the already ideologically charged rubble being used as materials, was conceptually "risky" indeed. Adult anxiety over this process was cloaked in terms of "child safety", arguing that the children's bodies were endangered by their material surroundings (broken glass, etc.).

Today much of the discourse and legislation surrounding and defining "risk" is based on actuarial practices (Simon 1988) which transform the individual from moral agent to actuarial subject. Children, already denied a variety of powers of citizenship and individuality, are easily grouped as such. Simon's study of this classification process as a "regime of truth, a way of exercising power, and a method of ordering social life" (Simon 1988: 772) is useful in demonstrating ways in which Evergreen is implicated in wider social structuring systems of childhood, and ways in which those systems govern what happens within site boundaries.

Although children, when out of adult's sight, are often considered "anarchistic" (James et al 1988: 11), some of the aspects of this kind of play were viewed positively by adults, who felt that constructive, manual activities might provide children with opportunities for construction of the physical self through learned bodily disciplines and exertions that would not otherwise be possible. Many "free play" advocates consider themselves to be on the "fringes" of educational theory (Bertelson 1943; Allen of Hurtwood 1972; Hart 1979; Gill 2005, etc.) and so the encouragement of non-violent "playful" subversive practices ties to the rather "hippie" adult value system. Even so, their notion of "free" play is not free of adult supervision or structuring systems. Evergreen's governing structures are determined through the collusion of council agents who provide permits, play workers who supervise the site and parents who bring their children. Each of these groups are implicated in the perpetuation of childhood as a state of being which is under adult protection, is characterized by play rather than labour and is marked by a lack of political power or sexuality.

Like other non-domestic places for children (such as schools, etc.) Adventure Playgrounds are restrictive of adults who enter. These sites are "spaces apart" from the wider public sphere, dedicated to the raising of children. Some play workers have argued that children ought to be more integrated into adult society, calling these sites "children's ghettos", "reservations" or "prisons" (Gill 2005). As such, theorists who have focused their attention on schools (Prendergast 1992; McGuffey and Rich 1999; Barker and Weller 2003, etc.) Sunday schools (Markus 1993) and prisons (Foucault 1977) can all easily be applied here. Governed by adults and their timetables, legislating dress, behaviour, privileging specific kinds of learned and

punishing others, the role of the school in "disciplining" young bodies as "appropriate" carriers or inheritors of the dominant adult culture and values, is now apparent (Foucault, Markus). While Adventure Playgrounds do not, on the surface, propose a particular curriculum or standard of child "achievement" as a school might, the decisions made by adults regarding the structural conditions of the site are neither accidental nor arbitrary. None of the decisions made onsite are accidental, but all are promotative in some way of the ideal of childhood and personhood that informed their design.

Evergreen's conceptual separation from the surrounding urban fabric is marked by a high fence and sturdy, locking gates. While ostensibly to "protect" the children inside from adult strangers without, or to "shield" those adults from the noise and seeming-chaos of the children within, this systematic enclosure facilitates the play workers' control over the social and material frameworks of activity onsite. As a designated location for "venting" behaviour, Evergreen permits some physical interactions which would be prohibited elsewhere, such as rough-and-tumble play with adults, running, shouting, climbing trees, etc. At the same time, Evergreen remains subject to external bodies of social regulation, which places outside limits on site activity. James, Jenks and Prout quote Elias's notion of "the civilizing process", how habits that once were common among Western adults, eating with one's hands, defecating as and where, have been renounced by since adults and relegated to the realm of childhood. These bodily routines must be left behind and new physical habits learned onsite, if the individual is to be viewed as a full adult beyond its walls. Evergreen Adventure Playground has a short, posted, set of rules such as "No hitting", etc., and a much longer set of "unwritten" rules that would, presumably, include outdoor defecation. As such, this site intended for participants to challenge and develop their physical capacities although requires a reading and learning of basic bodily techniques and disciplines.

Evergreen, and Adventure Playground theorists in general, elaborate upon the above requirements of "appropriate" childhood with articulated value systems of physical agility, creative potential and social inclusion. These specifications in the child-product are articulated through the social and material details of the site. As LeFebvre reminds us, "it is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived - and produced" (LeFebvre 1991:162). The intended body of

Evergreen is physically agile, strong, exploratory and sociable. These bodily disciplines are most explicitly interpreted in the large-scale play equipment which dominates the landscape of Evergreen. These constructions demand first attention, then physical engagement. Warnier's study of socially determined motricity (2001) suggests ways in which the body might shape itself through learned bodily techniques specific to material objects.

Opposed to the long tradition identified by Middleton (1998) of highly gendered recommendations for physical play, Evergreen and other adventure playgrounds actively encourage all members to use the various pieces of equipment. Even so, the children at Evergreen tend to articulate their own differences along strict gender lines. Thorne's assertion that at these ages segregation between girls and boys in middle childhood (roughly ages 8 to 12) is so entrenched that "it is meaningful to speak of separate girls' and boys' worlds" (Thorne 1986:167) is widely quoted, and seems to be borne out at Evergreen. She herself, however, stresses that studies often "ignore similarities" (Thorne 1986:170) and much of her research focuses on cross-gender contacts, e.g. "tomboys". Gender lines that are largely ignored by the play equipment become decisive factors by the two centrally located forts (marked by children "Girls" and "Boys"), and although access to space and materials of fort-building is ostensibly the same to all children one sees frequent displays of territoriality, power and control through ownership or transgressions of gendered fort-space. In addition to Judith Butler's work on the performativity of gender enactment, studies specific to middle childhood have looked at gender transgression and "patrolling" of border areas (McGuffey and Rich 1999; Jones and Cunningham 1999), as well as embodied experiences and material constructions of menarche (Prendergast 1992).

However, gender is only one of the means by which individual children understand themselves and their place(s) in the world. James identified five key aspects of the body that had particular social significance for the children she studied: height, shape, appearance, gender and performance. However, she argued that received cultural stereotypes were not passively absorbed by the children informants, but instead "actively apprehended" and used "to comprehend not only their own body but also its relationship to other bodies". Through this, she argued, "meanings for the body were forged" (James et al 1998:155).

These various "meanings" of and for the body combine socially and materially, creating opportunities for exploration of the ever-changing relationships between self and socio-material environment. Aging is associated with physical growth in childhood, though these each form social rather than "natural" variables (as one is only "big" on the playground if others are "smaller"). Age and size at Evergreen are key determinants of location, as certain age groups tend to coalesce at particular sites. It is only in middle childhood that informants had any knowledge of the outermost fringes of the site, for example, but what is often glossed as a "stage" of exploratory impulse might be a response to a growing individual confidence, itself resulting from the changes in how other children and adults treat this "larger" individual. The construction of dens, or bush houses in places with narrow entrances is both to suit the child users of the site, and to prevent adults from entering. Evergreen provides the individual with carefully selected opportunities to "prove" the body, to dress, test, train and display it.

James, Jenks and Prout (1998) have argued that the child's body forms, at the very least, a set of limits on the possibilities of childhood. They have also convincingly argued their rejection of the Piagetian developmental model in favour of one which recognizes children as social actors. As such we must, in examining the conditions of Evergreen, speak of socio-materiality, recognizing that objects have social lives and narratives, and that access to them is often socially determined and that materials become what they are through social use. As such, the choices that children make regarding the location, sociability and materiality of play are central to an understanding of the mechanisms by which the site determines their experiences of self, place and subjectivity, and of the means by which individual children might subvert these intentions for their own ends.

Theories regarding the mechanisms of play have posited a number of strategies for children's engagement with the material and social environment. Bob Hughes has posited "around 16" forms of play predicated on activity, such as "constructive", "social" and "creative" play (Hughes 2004). These classifications are fluid and not mutually exclusive, but they privilege action over interaction, separating the children's behaviour from its material environment. Although some forms of play, such as "constructive", necessitate a certain malleability of materials, play is not understood as reliant upon these materials for its character. Play, using these criteria, is a

function performed with materials, rather than through them.

Jan Huizinga argued that that play was impossible without its "secludedness, its limitedness" (31) being roped off from adult circumstances. This reflects a commonly held naturalized view of both children's behaviour and of the adult environment that presumes the existence of a "neutral" location in which play can occur without adult framing. This is not the case. Play, as an activity, has the ability to transform place, material and self through creative leaps, through the deliberate and explicit reconceptualization of each of these. Play has been theorized as nonsense as much as sense, as a constructive escapism that is only nominally located in the material surroundings of participants. Piaget's example of a shell re-imagined as a spoon demonstrates this assumption. However, strange as this playful process may be to an adult, it still began with a shell. Socially, materially, spatially and structurally, playgrounds create environments to promote specific kinds of play, and to limit others, with the intention of promoting certain forms of children and childhoods.

Roland Barthes's condemnation of "literal" toys (meaning miniaturized versions of 'adult' objects) hinged on the unidirectional socialization process they promoted, under which the child "can only identify himself (sic) as owner, as user, never as creator". Although he was speaking as a cultural critic rather than child theorist, his point that culture is transmitted, sometimes rather forcibly, through the materials which children are provided with for play stands. As a playground architect Paul argued against "overdesigned" play areas, such as castles, etc., which he viewed as thematically limiting to play.

Play occurs through, rather than with, materials and the imaginative abilities of children cannot be either entirely eradicated or overstated. Although children can imagine a shell to be a spoon, they still need a shell. Gibson's examination of material affordances, by which he means that which the environment or object "offers... provides or furnishes" the inhabitant (127), has application here. By considering objects for their affordances rather than their qualities we can imagine a myriad of uses that normally go unseen in our naturalized material order. When a child explores the affordances of a shell to "act" as a spoon, we are surprised. This small act calls into question our ordinarily naturalized patterns of behaviour. Framing this exploration as

play enables the child to "imagine" one object into "being" another, and the adult to conceptually restrain this troubling behaviour within a discourse of dismissal or marginalization. Even the phrase "child's play" implies that which is easy, frivolous or unimportant, though the social and spatial enclosures provided for it belie adult anxiety.

While Adventure Playgrounds still encourage material play with items that have "fallen" from adult systems of ordering, these are now twice vetted by adults between being declared "rubbish" and permitted onsite, once by an intermediary group which collects items from local businesses and again by the play workers. Instead of "rubbish" these items are termed "loose parts" (Hughes 1990; Gill 2005). These items are brought in to facilitate constructive play, either of forts or arts and crafts, in the grassy areas between and dark hollows behind the large-scale play equipment. This program is intended to provide children with the chance to practice "constructive" play (meaning the making of places, toys, etc.) and thus inculcate a set of bodily practices of mastery over materials. "Loose parts" are generally used because they are freed from adult usage and thus open for children's appropriation. This process of transformation from "rubbish" to "play materials" can be seen as a (re-)habilitation of child and material through mutual interaction. This is a low-stakes gamble for the materials, which were already classed as "rubbish", and for the children, who are "protected" by the elimination of items which might have led to physical harm.

This closed material landscape, populated with children and filled with carefully selected material items, is designed and managed with the specific aim of promoting construction of physically active, materially adept, socially adaptable children under the play workers' supervision. However, children are not passively inscribed by systems of power but engaged in a negotiation with them. It is here, in the articulations of self and place, that subjectivities are forged. Sometimes this process occurs through the deliberate ruination of adult-intended uses of objects (as seen in Wilkie's 2000 study of broken doll heads) or the (re-)appropriation of materials and place in ways that adults had not intended or envisioned (Cohen 1987; Woolley 2003). The children's locations and methods of use are intentional and signs of agency, and through these material placements we can examine the edges of adult authority and how these are understood, explored and transformed through children's actions.

Sobel's investigation into fort-building in middle childhood linked the creation of refuge in low-traffic corners of the adult world to the 'discovery' and development of the child's sense of self. These findings echo Bachelard's musings on 'the corner' as a place of immobility, of solitude and dreaming and Gibson's "hiding places" chosen for the concealment afforded (Gibson 1986:136). These places are shifting, short-lived, created by a draped cloth and a chair dragged from the central building. The very temporary nature of their construction and use has been valorised as "typical" of child's play by some authors (James et al 1998; Hughes 1990) and some theorists have attempted to locate their construction as a universal aspect of middle childhood (Hart 1979; Sobel 1993). Sobel's study in particular demonstrates the extreme difficulty of an investigation into these places, as they are used as bastions of privacy for children, whether alone or in a group. Sobel, following on from Jung, went on to argue forts as a means of protecting the "immanent self" which is in the process of developing, but if we view children as "beings" not "becomings" we can examine the immediate negotiations undertaken through place.

Children's physical and social location is liminal to adult society. As a marginalized group, however, they are neither neglected nor disregarded, but instead their containment within these marginal areas of provision is strictly maintained. As the most watched members of society, children's learned techniques of secrecy can be seen through the detritus of play found regularly in fringe places. The ways in which these places are created, enacted, perpetuated, transformed and abandoned can provide clues as to the means by which the self and community is being created through place and materiality. Through the material remains of these places we can begin to examine the objects chosen for inclusion and enactment, speculate on the social affordances of these objects, and consider the means by which children "make" these places of difference within the socio-material landscape.

The means by which marginalized groups have made places for themselves to explore, create and celebrate subversive modes of being has been explored by Chauncey (1995) in *Gay New York*, and speculated upon by Wilkie, whose study of broken dolls heads is, in effect, an archaeology of children's alternative material practices as subversion. From archaeology of the recent (and less than recent) past we can see approaches that problematize material findings and the question of

abandonment, such as Buchli and Lucas's 2000 exploration of the break-down of specific kinds of familial subjectivities through material remains. McFadyen's 2007 questioning of Mesolithic spatial-material inhabitation suggests ways in which material findings onsite can be understood as part of a continuing narrative of use, rather than as "dead" items in a closed landscape.

If socio-material relationships can be seen as a negotiation of self and subjectivities we must accept that, while the adult-designed landscape of Evergreen offers particular opportunities for subversive transformations, these transformations are known and accommodated within the system. As such, the inscription of place upon personhood is neither unidirectional nor uncomplicatedly subverted. Instead, the process of Evergreen's construction of childhood allows for certain forms of rebellion. Nikolas Rose's study of subjectivity and power provides tools to dismantle the means by which the work of "autonomous individuals to strive for 'self-realization'" is nurtured and directed so that these individuals "exercise their freedom in the right kind of ways" (Rose 1996:17).

Barker and Weller identified a "new sociology of childhood", of which Aries was the forerunner and Corsaro, James, Jenks and Prout, Sobel, Hart and many others are contributors. This "new approach" is one of "negotiation, not imposition" (Barker and Weller 2003: 208) which rejects a model of childhood as proto- or incomplete adulthood in favor of direct interaction with children. These researchers consider children to be "competent witnesses" of their lives and their worlds, and as social actors. Through a close examination of the material changes made by children in one Adventure Playground we can begin to understand the transformations wrought on play, material and self within the confines of an adult ordering system. The children's active negotiations of these confines can explicate the processes of co-construction of place and subjectivity, and of individual explorations of freedoms, limitations and potentials for change.

Methodology

Rubble and children both were classifications charged post-war with associations of lost innocence, of familiarity violently destroyed. Children playing in bomb sites after the Second World War were engaged in a process of (re-)clamation of material and space, transforming abandoned lots from their post-bombing rubble state conceptually and physically through play. Together they were viewed as a risky and volatile combination. A group of people calling themselves advocates of “free play” soon came to impose a degree of order upon the bomb sites to make them "safer" for children. In doing so they created a hybrid space of adult-child compromise, a location of restrained chaos, of supervised freedom. They also developed the profession of "play worker", intended to facilitate, but not determine, "free" or "creative" play. Today, Adventure Playgrounds are established on sites of land that were not necessarily bombed, frequently they are constructed, delineated and placed under the restriction of a set of adult structures such as clock time, the local County Council's notions of safety, propriety and even an adult definition of play itself. As such, Adventure Playgrounds are advocated, established and managed for children, but not by them. Adults hold the literal and figurative keys of access here, just as they do at schools, homes, libraries and day care centres.

"Childhood" and "play" are both historically specific concepts, constructed materially and through discourse (Aries 1962; Cohen 1987). Play, as a means of negotiation with the environment, has been seen by some as the means by which children assert their agency, explore the potentials of self and surroundings, and even construct new "realities" which creatively reinterpret their observations of adult society (James et al 1998). Evergreen's location within traditions of "free play" and Adventure Playgrounds implies an understanding of childhood and play that is predicated upon notions of "natural development". The value system accorded to play onsite results in a variety of large-scale adult-designed play pieces designed so that children might acquire bodily disciplines of physical agility and strength. Other opportunities are also provided for, primarily through the allocation of fringe areas and "loose parts" for child-oriented activities such as den-making.

Children's bodies can be viewed as sites of cultural contention, as places where sets of ideals regarding childhood and personhood collide. The stakes are high, as children are commonly viewed as society's most vulnerable members, as well as shifting, anarchistic and unpredictable in their own right (James et al 1998:11). All societies have children as members, though their location is often spatially and socially liminal. Following studies of prisons, asylums, factories and offices as places of construction of the self, Markus examined traditional building styles of schools, Sunday schools and playgrounds to address the means by which "childhood" has been conceptualized and re(defined) through formalization of both its spaces and activities. Rose's notion of "assemblages", meaning the "localization and connecting together of routines, habits and techniques within specific domains of action and value" (Rose 1996:38) demonstrates how these tools of analysis can be brought to bear upon locations that might seem ideologically opposite to Foucault's prisons and mental institutions, yet still remain analogous. The structures of lessons, timetables, adult supervision and "proper" play all serve to articulate the (re-)habilitated child through its containment and occupations, providing a framework within which the self is constructed.

Sociologists and developmental psychologists have, for many years, considered play to be a largely experimental mimicry of adult behaviour, and thus an essential part of "socialization". In contrast, Opie and Opie pioneered a conception of children's activities as part of a "children's culture" quite separate from that of adults, perpetuated through separate activities and passed down largely unchanging between generations of young. This kind of independence of cultural activity was explored in the unmonitored explorations of children playing in bomb sites. The selection of socially problematic places for play, outside of adult "stabilizing networks" (Edensor 2005:313) can be interpreted as a deliberate evasion of adult structures of power and control. For adults, these children were no longer striving towards "acculturation" into the public sphere but were instead literally building their own social and spatial "places" on the forgotten and destabilized fringes of the adult world.

The discourse of "child safety" and "risk" provided a means of enclosing these sites and (re-)imposing an adult ordering system upon them. That discourse now has a hand in the material elements of Evergreen, and the ways in which the child, as an individual and as a social

classification, is understood. Today much of the discourse and legislation surrounding and defining "risk" is based on actuarial practices (Simon 1988) which transform the individual from moral agent to actuarial subject in seeming contradiction to modern Western society's preoccupation with individualism. This a process which the young, as the social group with the least political power, are particularly open to. Simon's study of this classification process as a "regime of truth, a way of exercising power, and a method of ordering social life" (Simon 1988: 772) is useful in demonstrating ways in which Evergreen is implicated in wider social structuring systems of childhood, and ways in which those systems govern the potential for constructing new subjectivities onsite. Rose's investigation of the means by which neo-liberal societies govern "subjects" through, rather than in spite, of their enactment of "selfhoods", ties to this actuarial consideration to suggest that "free play" is, in fact, anything but.

Fieldwork with children has most often been undertaken at schools (Hartup 1978; Krenichyn 1999; McGuffey and Rich 1999, etc.) or in the private home (Barnard 2006; Cohen 1987, etc.) although exceptions include hospitals (Armstrong 1983), factories with child labour (reviewed in James et al 1998) and bush houses (Hart 1979; Sobel 1993). Barker and Weller's qualitative studies demonstrate the influence of the place of interview upon findings, and suggests ways in which this can influence methodological approaches. Fieldwork with children is notoriously fraught with practical and legal dilemmas, as a series of "gatekeepers" must be appeased before access can be gained. My own research was greatly facilitated by locating it within the adventure playground framework, where qualified and experienced play workers were in authority over me. My interactions with participants were often observed, even if from a distance. In promising to adhere to the playground's guidelines of respect for and physical interaction with the children, I located myself and my research within their structure legally, socially and practically. Although most interviews were out of the hearing of play worker's, the course and content of my conversation with children was doubtless altered by the physical context and conceptual/behavioural frame of the site.

During fieldwork I formed a pattern of questioning that identified me as someone who wanted to be taught how to play. While playing, I let the children direct activities and tried to keep my influence over events as minimal as possible. When discussing methodological approaches,

James, Jenks and Prout query whether moments of "difference" between adults and children might not be the key to understanding childhood, highlighting as they do the precise locations of irrevocable adulthood. Fine argued that "there is methodological value in maintaining the differences between sociologists and children" (Fine 1988:17), such as in the ability then to ask "non-kid" questions. I attempted to construct a flexible role for myself as neither child nor play worker, and the first step was the explanation that I, like them, was under the play workers' authority.

In clothing and general attitude I attempted to "blend" as much as possible, wearing jeans and a T-shirt, being unafraid to get dirty, try the play equipment and scramble up trees. My pink Converse trainers proved an ice breaker, as they are of a style more commonly seen on children. By telling them that I was a student (and that my note-taking was for a "school project") I became a minor-adult, larger and older than them but there to learn. However, a number of physical differences were inescapable, and it was these that I became increasingly conscious of over the course of fieldwork. When at play, I immediately became hyper-conscious of my physicality, feeling excessively large, old, American and female. These attributes were noticed, accommodated or remarked upon in play or in conversation with the children, and each played a part in determining our interaction, and my findings. Having been classed as "fun", I was at times a high-prestige visitor to groups of children at play. Girls in particular would vie for my attention, and attempt to include me either in their group activities, or to remove me for a talk alone. As an adult younger than their parents I became an immediate source of interest (largely, I suspect, because I was so interested in them). As an adult student I was strange, but approachable. As an American, I was at times viewed as almost dazzlingly cool. In spite of all my attempts to de-emphasize these aspects of myself they were repeatedly remarked upon by children I interacted with throughout the first day of fieldwork.

Regardless of all individualizing attempts I made, only a few of the girls I spoke with regularly addressed me as anything other than "Miss". Play workers, too, complain of this phenomenon. I believe it is an indication that, regardless of the play worker's self-image as a non-hierarchical facilitator of play, the children are well aware of whose control the site is under, and are too accustomed to adults in a position of explicit authority over them to accept that I, in fact, was

not. It might also serve as a subversive means of collectivizing the adults in power.

The children who came to call me by my name (Nina, 6; Aneesha, 8/9; Shandra, 6 and Tonya, 10¹) also became my best informants, eager to guide me around the site and explain its territories to me. Through these walking interviews I discovered for myself the importance of context when interviewing children, as conversations varied dramatically when walking “through the forest” (often groups of trees quite small by adult standards) or when we were at the forts. In discussing an area of the site when standing somewhere else, I found that problems often seemed to stem from my inability to describe specific locations in a way recognizable to the child. In this we, literally, spoke different languages of place. However, once we were standing in the location I found children to be on the whole remarkably eloquent and eager to "explain" places to me, to share their conception of place with someone who was very much an outsider. Informants fell between the ages of six and twelve, and, as in R.D. Laing's 1978 published ethnography that shocked audiences with its transcriptions of juvenile eloquence (James et al 1998:177), I found the children at Evergreen to be extremely capable of making themselves understood and communicating quite complex feelings, preferences and memories. All quotes that follow as verbatim as possible, given that I could not record them.

Location determined not only the content of the conversation, but also whether we would speak at all. When standing by play equipment, where prowess, speed and strength were the primary social currency, boys would speak with me quite easily. However, if I called to them from the fort area (where the Girls' and Boys' Forts stood approximately fifteen feet apart) they would not answer. Conversely, interactions regarding "girlhood" were largely restricted to the Girls' Fort. Painted with flowers and love-hearts in pink and red, labeled in massive bubble letters, the Girls' Fort created a space of gender exclusivity that worked upon my own physicality. I began to feel that my body was “more gendered” by the forts, a feeling strengthened when one girl Aneesha, 8/9, began teasing me about my breasts, painting a giant bra on the side of the house. Later Nina, 6 grabbed at my breasts, laughing when I told her to stop. This space, then, was for examining and creating the female self, through comparison to and opposition with the Boys' House (painted with rocket ships). As an older female, I was allowed into the space, studied, and

1 All names provided are pseudonyms. While a study of race at Evergreen is outside the scope of this paper I attempted, through selection of pseudonyms, to suggest the ethnic diversity of informants.

the findings were posted for other group members. This begins to explain why, while largely accepted into children's group play, I was only a high-prestige visitor among girls, and regularly dragged back to the fort area.

While "child" is an arbitrary term that glosses over important differences such as age, race, gender, etc., and no one explanation of place can be seen as indicative or sufficient for all "children", a general consensus was reached through interview. Gaps were produced in "mapping" interviews, particularly at the fringes of the site. Younger girls, roughly aged 6 to 8, were my most enthusiastic informants, eager to show me "shortcuts" and "secret places", but "their playground" ended at the first tree line, behind which I had noticed evidence of use. When I questioned older children, those whose size, familiarity and exploratory drive might have encouraged them into these fringe areas, they generally said that they did not go there, that it was "just a place" (Tonya, 10), "no-place" (Aneesha, 8/9) or "not my place" (Monique, 10). The essential contradictions in this were often glossed by an informant's shrug and the changing of the subject.

A child's envisioning of space changes over time, as the child's physical growth and aging changes material and social access, or the "affordances" of place. For example, a two foot by three foot shortcut between paths will, if thickly grown over with ivy and low-hanging trees, be viewed as a "secret" way by a six year old, whose movement through the landscape is restricted both physically and socially. Knowledge of this "secret place" will be prized in a way that it would not among a nine or ten year old, who might already regard it as routine. A child twelve or older will probably no longer see it as a "way" at all, because it has become awkwardly small to crouch through. Similarly, older children gain prestige and power over younger, assuming control of locations as the older generation "ages out". Thus places, particularly "hiding places" (Gibson 1986:136) shift in meaning between games, children of comparable ages and those same children over time.

Den-building is, as Sobel discovered, an extremely private undertaking. In all the time I spent at Evergreen I did not see a single child engaged in den-making (though clearly waiting in likely spots with a notepad would have precluded the very activity I was seeking to study). My

attempts to discuss these fringe locations with informants by walking with them were met with resistance. It quickly became clear that I would not be permitted to witness what happened there, and I would not have it explained to me. This, not contradicting but elaborating upon the extreme privacy of the bush houses Sobel toured with their owners, shows that while adults may be "shown" these places, they would not be shown their function. Their function, in fact, would be impossible with the adults there. From conversations with children elsewhere at the playground, and through observation of children's behaviour at its "edges", I believe that the primary users of the greenery-covered fringe areas would be between 8 and 12. Younger children were interested in exploring smaller, more central, areas, and older children were primarily occupied in large-group socialization next to the Woods.

One of these fringe locations, which I termed the "Den", proved rich in material findings. Behind a large piece of play equipment (the Flying Fox), through a path covered with dense and low-hanging branches (Fig. 1.1), marked by juice boxes and crisp packets (Fig. 1.2, 1.3), past thickets hung with scraps of paper and cloth, was a clearing stamped in a rough circle. A few crisp packets blown open, an overturned chair, a piece of half-rotted tarpaulin or curtain tied between one tree and another were all that remained as evidence (Fig. 1.4, 1.5). At closing time each day, when the site is left first by children and then by adults, changes in the material elements of these sites betray the myriad uses to which children, in groups or individually, have put them. Chairs and tables dragged from the main building, re-orientated or overturned in the den space, demonstrate the physical effort put into transformation of place, and hint at possible social functions.

In studying the places I could not go, I came to rely upon the archaeological findings to suggest patterns and processes of den-building, to examine these marginal places as they were left at the end of each day when they were seemingly "abandoned". I observed these places during the course of my fieldwork, first to gain a sense of the rhythms of these play spaces as their patterns of use rose or fell, then to talk to children about these places. Through participating in group play elsewhere on site (particularly by the Forts) I investigated some of the means by which children of different ages can occupy, transform and create places through play, and the ways in which this process is tied to one of transforming and creating the self, of coming to inhabit one's

own body. Then, over the course of a seemingly typical week, I catalogued the material changes of one area through mapping the items left behind by children. This largely archaeological approach borrows heavily from McFayden's study of items left by the nomadic people of Mesolithic Britain, but is fortified by the opportunity to study the material leavings onsite on four consecutive occasions, and supported by participant-based fieldwork with the children in other areas of the playground.

The chairs and tables are left in the Den area by staff, though the crisp packets and so on are conceptualized as rubbish and periodically cleared on "litter-picking" missions (every 1 to 3 days), using long tongs and black plastic bags before being removed from the site. While my combination of approaches gave me a chance to investigate the children and play workers' attitudes to the various material elements I found on site and to speculate on their social uses, it is still unknown how frequently this place was "found" and "left", by which groups, their size or composition. What we have instead are the material facts of this place at five o'clock every afternoon.

It is important to realize that children, while not a homogeneous group by any means, often display relationships with materials and materiality that seem foreign to adults. Their readiness to "imagine" one object as another for the purposes of play is well-documented (though not well understood), as is their ability to "materialize" without creating a material object. An (im)material positing of the self outside of the self can take many forms, such as the "imaginary friend" who is unrestrained by the modes of behaviour which the child is negotiating, and who can satisfy the subject's need for mischief, attention, etc. I have been given many gifts of a handful of air, told that this hand-shaped nothing was "ice cream with red and black sauce" (Tyrone, 6). The social and cultural framework of gift-giving successfully exists in its entirety without the central object. Because the "object" has import only within the context of the game, the gift serves its purpose if it is given and received. The object is maintained imaginatively, enacted through social and cultural behaviours, and "forgotten" when no longer required.

That said, children's at time profound attachment to material objects is also well-documented. Sobel's examination of children's use of tea sets, etc., in the production of domesticity in bush-

houses shows how material elements can provide fixed reference points for the individual child, loci around which to tie ideas and performances of place, of ownership. These places seen as essential for exploration, creation and learning techniques of the self for adults (Bachelard 1958, LeFebvre 1991, Markus 1993) and for children (Hart 1979, Sobel 1993). In historical archaeology, children's material leavings have been examined as a key to questioning ways in which "children's intentions and experiences" might be traced (Wilkie 2000:100). What, then, were the materials at the children's disposal, and what were the means of and possible reasons for their (re)location and "abandonment" in the Den area?

First it is necessary to examine and explain the Den, how one locates it. As can be seen in Figures 2.1 - 2.4, the Den area could be reached by three separate entrances, marked A, B and C.

Entrance A runs along the perimeter wall, down the length of the Flying Fox, and was the depository of the largest accumulation of material leavings. However, at busy times this would have been a difficult path to take as it would have necessitated crossing beneath the zip wire of the Flying Fox, and the line of sight of all children waiting for this popular piece of equipment. I believe that a large proportion of the crisp packets and drinks found here were in fact thrown down from the Flying Fox platform, and cannot be assumed to be left by those seeking to use the Den area itself.

Entrance B is a narrow dirt slope running between the Flying Fox and a dense area of trees, shrubs and ivy which overhang it. This entrance is difficult to see from the outside, but has the benefit of being an extremely quick and subtle way of entering, of essentially "falling" into the Den area without drawing attention to one's movements. Due to its steepness, it forms an entrance, but not an exit.

Entrance C follows a densely covered path that runs along the North perimeter wall. Entrance is found between hedges and trees, down an ivy-covered slope. It is the first row of trees which, for the younger informants (primarily ages 6 and 7) forms their conceptual perimeter of the playground, and this path which feels the most private, and most "secretive", as it is hidden from the rest of the playground and creates a conceptual "trek" towards the Den area. Although a

degree of visibility is afforded on the Flying Fox platform, those above must kneel down and peer through wooden slats to look through extremely dense tree cover. Although theoretically the Den could be entered by any of these, I believe that in busy times, when the Flying Fox creates an obstacle to Entrance A and an audience to Entrance B, it is Entrance C that would be the primary path to take.

Figures 1.1 through 1.3 give a suggestion of how densely covered this entrance is, with low hanging branches meeting above that cast the area into dappled green shade. It is difficult to convey, however, the profound sense of secrecy to this area if approached through Entrance C. This sense of picturesque semi-ruination, or abandonment as discussed by Edensor, leaves the site largely "open" to participant re-imagining. It evokes Bachelard's image of the child in solitude's experience of "cosmic reverie", or Hughes's theory of "recapitulative play" (the process through which children explore "primitive" ways of being) (Hughes 2004). The "primitiveness" of children, or conversely their "innocence" of culture, has been argued since Rousseau and regularly deployed in academic and popular theories of childhood. However, such terms imply a *tabula rasa* view of the "socialized" child, suggesting an inept interaction with or incomplete understanding of their material and social environments. I argue that, while play may be experimental and explorative it is also constructive and subversive, demonstrating a fully engaged negotiation with place. Similarly, an uncritical view of the Den area as "natural" glosses over its adult-made elements and position within the wider constructs of power and authority.

The composite and conceptually "permanent" elements of this Den are taken to be as follows: the underside of the Flying Fox (a piece of large-scale play equipment which from behind forms a roof-like shelter over a steeply sloping area of dirt), the trees, earth, ivy-covered walls and paths. Apart from the play equipment, these can all be glossed as "natural", in that they are green, growing elements, and I have reason to believe that the children viewed them as such. The walls and play equipment, I believe, formed for the children a frame around the "wild nature" of this corner. A degree of surveillance into the Den was possible from the Flying Fox, and from here children at times commented to me upon the area that I was investigating, comments that demonstrated their view of this place as "wild". A girl named Shania, 9, called to me once, saying "Eww, don't go there, you'll get insects in your *hair!*" Her friend Monique, 10,

added that she could not go there, because she had "asthma. And eczema." Their fears regarding the Den area were of an uncontrolled or invasive "nature", i.e. that the plants and mosquitoes there would breach the boundaries of their bodies in some way. Placing the body in this environment was, for some, to risk illness and colonization. However, as changes made to the Den area indicate, a number of children did use the space, making deliberate and personal modifications to it according to their needs. While I received enough descriptions of the Den area to presume a widely held belief among children in its privacy, wildness and remoteness, it is clear that responses to this belief differed, according to age and individual preferences (as well as potentially other factors, such as gender, medical beliefs etc.).

As has been stated previously, the range of materials at the children's disposal was relatively limited, its diversity coming primarily from the packaging surrounding their packed lunches. Without fail, each food package was found entirely emptied. Apart from the items brought from home, the non-"permanent" items brought to the Den area were tables, plastic chairs and hollow plastic balls. In terming these items "out of place" I am aware of placing a personal judgment upon them, according to my own notions of place and belonging. This is intended only to facilitate an understanding of where these items may have originated, and why they were brought to this area, to understand the material components of this place as it was made, through the deliberate juxtaposition and manipulation of the material elements at the children's disposal.

Across the four days of mapping (Wednesday the playground was closed in favor of a field trip off-site) a number of things are constant. By far the most commonly found element was the empty crisp packet. These were located at each entrance, along the ivy-covered paths and congregated in a ring around the central clearing. I believe that their popularity as material leavings is in part an indication of their popularity among children as a lunch item. However, a number of children also bring sandwiches, for example, or other "main courses" for lunch, and only a few of these packagings were found. Thus, I suggest that bags of crisps serve another purpose. More easily shared than a sandwich, the prevalence of empty crisp packets might also suggest a communal aspect to this area, a suggestion perhaps borne out by the common presence of multiple chairs and the sheer number of crisp packets and juice boxes uncovered.

MondayTuesdayThursdayFridayCrisp packets9101212Juice boxes1191317Ice Cream Wrappers0011Biscuit wrappers0511Chicken boxes2122Misc.0126

It is through the mapping of these "miscellaneous" items that I base assumptions of use patterns, suggesting that the area was visited by different groups day by day, according to the particularity of their lunches. The children I spoke to during fieldwork were remarkably consistent in the lunches they brought. Those whose parents packed for them tended to bring a sandwich, crisps, biscuits and a drink, or a box of fried chicken and chips. Those who packed their own were, if anything, more consistent in their choices (again, sandwich, crisps, biscuits and drink) and insistent upon what set of foods constituted a "lunch". Their comments on the lunches I brought at first (generally a container of leftovers from the previous night's dinner) were that it "looked boring" (Nina, 6) or "bad". Some offered to supplement my lunch with parts of their own, particularly crisps or biscuits that came in a bag. This showed me which foods they considered "shareable" or communal, and which they did not. Neither sandwiches nor pieces of fruit were shared, as they could not easily be broken by hand. Thus, when considering the social uses and creation of this area, it is important to look at the affordances, not only of location, but also of the individual material elements brought in to create this place and the implications of communalities.

The children's materials, such as crisp packets, are predominantly and consistently found along the entrance paths and the back perimeter of the space, where the dense undergrowth curves to make an opening. The predominance of crisp packets, rather than sandwich wrappers, implies a group usage, as does the movement of two large tables, which would be difficult for an individual child to have carried up a slope and wedged between a tree and the wall (Figs. 2.2, 2.3). From my examination of the Den area, I believe that more than four or possibly five children at one time would become conspicuous to those outside and on the platform above. As such, I think it worthwhile to presume a small-group usage of this space, not necessarily at the exclusion of separate visits from individuals. Individual visits are also suggested by the presence of ice cream wrappers on Thursday and Friday. These are the highest-prestige food items, available only once a day, and it seems highly unlikely that they would be shared.

While the semi-permanent fixtures of two tables and two or three chairs remained constant, their positions moved regularly. During Tuesday these movements were slight, both chairs moving in

their position to the table (becoming more suggestive of conversation), but by Thursday the plan had changed dramatically. Both tables were dragged tight up against the far wall, up an ivy-covered slope. I believe that one child alone would have found this very difficult, again suggesting group activity. It is also worth noting that at the end of each day at least one large and central item was found overturned. On Monday and Tuesday one of the tables was on its back in the centre of the clearing, while on Thursday and Friday the chairs moved from the edge of the clearing to deep in the hedge, each tangled one inside the other. This is suggestive of materially maintained form of exclusivity as even seemingly mundane or once-domestic objects resist interpretation. Play theorists speculate on the "end" of play, suggesting a completeness of cycle that ends in "abandonment" or "destruction". When discussing a place, however, these small cycles of each game must be seen as occurring within the context of place, inseparable from the process of its continual (re-)creation. McFadyen's theorizing of Mesolithic people's engagement with the landscape as "ongoing and active" (McFadyen 2007:119) provides a means of analysis that is not restricted by traditional archaeological assumptions of "closed" or "abandoned" spaces. This approach can help us to understand the Den as a place of continual re-creation through materials which are not only in place, but productive of that place.

Play is generally conceptualized as a discrete process (Cohen 1987; Hughes 1990 and many others) of claiming an object or place, transforming and ultimately abandoning it. LeFebvre's *rhythmanalysis* (2004) provides one means of interpreting the patterns of use found onsite. Childhood play can be seen as having both cyclical and linear directions, as learning occurs by repetition. Each repetition informing the next in what LeFebvre terms the bodily training of "dressage". This can be seen be traced materially, through repetitive elements such as the crisp packets, and linear changes such as the (re-)location of the table and chairs. A study of this layered material leavings can inform our understanding of what Markus terms the "narrative" of place, one which the play workers may be largely oblivious in but which they are, through their repeated removal of materials, directly and fundamentally implicated.

In seeming opposition to the sheltered, coherent and conversational privacy of the Den lie the Woods, an expanse of trees and uneven terrain which consumes roughly one-sixth of Evergreen, holding for many informants a position of fear, intimidation, mystery and danger. In interviews,

children of all ages knew the Woods and held strong opinions on the "character" of the area. Described as "scary" (Nina, 6 and Monique, 10), "creepy" (Monique) and "weird" (Tonya, 10), the Woods occupied a position of almost archetypal fear for some informants, who mentioned the profound darkness, and dangers such as foxes. For others, this was the precise nature of its appeal. Nina and other 6 or 7 year olds would regularly run the length of the platform, often screaming, in what might be termed an ecstasy of fear.

Part of the reason for this is spatial/material as the Woods are thickly covered by trees, making the area quite dark. Paths through are not well-treaded and clear as they are leading in and out of the Den, but instead fragmented by slopes and trees, necessitating a "new" exploration with each visit. The closely spaced trees reduce visibility, and an echoing effect off the back wall means that while one can hear voices, it is difficult to determine where they are calling from. In addition to this, the Woods are located behind the Tower, which is dominated by the oldest children on-site (12 to 15). McGuffey and Rich, Woolley and other researchers have problematized the adult category of "child" by demonstrating one community's material and social demonstrations of power over another, primarily along age and gender lines. While the oldest children on site generally seemed to ignore the youngest, those in middle childhood occupy an at times precarious physical and cognitive "location", being "too old" for some activities but yet "too young" to claim a role in others. However, a high wooden platform runs from the Western entrance deep inside the Woods, then turns and runs in a steep slope to the Northern entrance. This platform, providing a clear and elevated means of crossing the whole of the Woods, is heavily used by informants of all ages. Material findings in the Woods are almost exclusively found at the base of the platform, suggesting that they are dropped from above. Exceptions are balls found deep in the peripheral undergrowth, suggesting that they were kicked, thrown or rolled there and then not retrieved. Apart from these, a number of large sticks were found, broken off of trees and stripped of small twigs, sometimes bashed at the centre, that had been thrown into the bushes at the edges.

It is easy to say that the experience of fear is domesticated at Evergreen, as the children know that they are in no actual physical danger, but to do so would dismiss the role of child agency in collective place-making. What determines "danger" is variable, and not to be underestimated. In

fact, part of both the hazard and appeal of the Woods is its almost complete sheltering from adult supervision. When one of the special needs children was found there naked, a group of older children were assumed to have induced him to strip, but no one stepped forward as witness. The secrecy and danger of the area, and the anonymity of the primary actors, was thus preserved.

Why then would children go to the Woods at all? Play theorists such as Hughes have examined this exploration of and experimentation with extreme emotion, calling it "deep play" (Hughes 2004). Nina, through both her description and use of this place, demonstrates how these Woods are created conceptually, then maintained materially as a place of mystery and fear. If a large enough group of children wished to change the character of the place, they could do so. The materials of domestication, MDF sheets for fort-building, tarpaulins to hang between trees, are available. Instead, children themselves keep the area "clean" of children's materials, the entrances free of crisp packets and no new paths stamped out.

In interview it became clear that some informants did use this place, which held seemingly contradictory roles at different times of day. Monique's fears were of the older children, who may have behaved with her in a different manner to Nina, who was perhaps too young for them "to bother with". Monique's mother was often late to collect her, and she used this time to walk through the Woods, knowing that almost all the other children had left. When long days meant the sun was still up at 5 o'clock closing, the Woods were for her "nice, really". Nina's fears for the place revolved around its darkness and the foxes that came at night, permitting her to run through it in the early afternoon when the area was brightest. When asked why she went there, she said that the Woods were "scary", but then added, "I'm scary too, sometimes".

Conclusions

The construction of a physical and psychic "place" for one's self in the world is a process of building both refuge and vantage point within the dominant socio-spatial ordering systems. Bachelard's imaginative meditation on the child's refuge as a place to engage with the "cosmos" is compelling, but incomplete as it relies upon a pre-social view of the child. Children do not occupy "neutral" places, but instead engage in a constant negotiation with adult-dominated locations. The physical spaces of childhood shape the psychic through learned, repetitive and creative bodily acts through which the individual's subjectivities are forged. The tangibility of dens provides not only an opportunity for "flights" of thought and reverie, but also for mediation-through-acting, for the literal creation of new worlds. Through this material mediation with space, children can engage with and (re)define adult terms that dominate the discourse of childhood and the experiences of children themselves. By making "places" for play children are able to provide for the assembling of "selves" capable of experiencing those states which adults would exorcize from "childhood", such as fear, power or sexuality. The material processes of place-making play are constructive and exploratory, repetitive and innovative, inherently productive and inherently playful.

While children grow into adults, and adults were once children, it is dangerous to assume that the state of one can be adequately imagined by the other. Developmental psychologists have suggested stages of childhood as periods of heightened sensitivity to certain aspects of the world, suggesting that at different times they are bodily equipped to perceive the world in particular ways. A look at how bodily changes in size are culturally interpreted and negotiated challenges common perceptions of children's state as one of pre-adulthood, of "becoming" rather than "being". Even so, the adult, in reinserting the self physically into the spaces of childhood, does so with a different imaginative "body" than the one which experienced them to begin with. As such, the adult's intentions and conception of dens provide limited explication of these processes of den-making as undertaken by children.

Dens in adult literature or play theory tend to be viewed with all the distortions of nostalgia and have been used to demonstrate the socialization process (James et al 1998), linked to "natural

development" (Schweinhart L and Weikart 1997; Gill 2007 and others), and advocated as bastions of privacy in which the self might "emerge" (Sobel 1993, following Jung). As a location set aside for "free play" according to adult guidelines and under supervision, Evergreen is establishing itself as both warehouse and factory in the construction of "healthy" children "naturally developing" through play. Inadvertently referencing Rousseau, Bachelard and others whose concepts of children were predicated on a utopic nostalgia, Evergreen creates a set of material and social conditions which operate as curricula, promoting "child" and of "childhood" ideals of physical agility, material mastery and social cohesion.

Bachelard envisioned the "spaces" of childhood as locations of departure and communion with the "cosmos", as places of intellectual and spiritual freedom. However, children's playful and constructive reveries are framed by their performance in and with an adult-created and adult-managed landscape, and the playful re-imagining that may occur does so as an engagement with the material, spatial and social environment. Traditionally schools, both religious and secular, have been studied alongside prisons for an examination of the material and immaterial means by which the body is governed or inscribed (Foucault 1977; Markus 1993). However, in spite of their "free play" ideals, Adventure Playgrounds have similar (and derivative) power structures, legislating dress, behaviour, the passage of time, means of access to places and materials, and privileging specific kinds of bodily educations while punishing others. The role of the school in disciplining young bodies as "appropriate" carriers or inheritors of the dominant adult culture and values is now apparent. The material, social and temporal organization of Evergreen thus implies a set of assumptions about what a child, and a childhood, ought to be, and attempts to produce them through social and bodily disciplines. Conceptualized, advocated, started, run and even closed by adults, these sites explicitly foster the production of specific kinds of subjectivities in the children under their control.

The childhood as defined and advocated by "free" or "adventure" play theorists is largely predicated upon physical fitness, creativity in play and exploration of surrounding environments. These attributes, in childhood, are believed to contribute to a "better" or "ideal" adult(hood) which elaborates in particular ways upon the widely held notion of "childhood" as a state of being. This "popular" idea of childhood can be seen one which is preoccupied with "play" rather

than "work" and characterized by frivolity, powerlessness, "cuteness", asexuality and the obligation to be happy. This "child" is protected by society but also restricted by it socially, spatially, financially and materially, and carries a minimum of influence over these restrictions. The child of the Adventure Playground is similarly protected and restricted, but within these structures particular needs and activities are created and provided for. These are designed to create athletic, physically active children who are non-aggressive and sociable across lines of age, gender and race. The attentive coherence of adult discipline over them demonstrates the depth of anxiety over these individuals, widely viewed as incomplete, anarchic emblems of chaos, that will one day, inevitably, inherit the earth.

Evergreen implements its structure of power through repetitively experienced systems of "reward" and "danger". These systems can be seen as inherent to what Edensor terms the "material systems of ordering", or the material elements chosen by adults to compose place. One example of this can be seen in the large-scale fixed play equipment which visually dominates the landscape. Reinforced by the social cachet of their mastery, the viewing platforms at the top provide a "reward" for the physically demanding activity of climbing, the pursuit of which necessitates learning specific bodily disciplines, fostering the construction of athletic, slim subjects in line with the Adventure Play ideal.

We can begin to explore the possibilities for construction of new and potentially unexpected subjectivities through systems of "danger" by examining the edges of "propriety" that classify behaviour. While encouraged in specific contexts (i.e. wrestling with the play workers) "aggressive" behaviour outside of this adult-determined propriety is punished by exile to the gate and transformation of the "disobedient child's body" into public example. It also reinforces onsite notions of surveillance, supposedly inspiring self-governance of the controlled subjects (Foucault 1977). However, perceived danger can inspire aversion towards that behaviour, i.e. self-governance towards non-aggressive behaviour, or curiosity. This curiosity can lead to exploration of the very behaviour prohibited as a direct result of its prohibition. In these cases an understanding of adult observation and its consequences can lead to a different deployment of the subject's learned strategies of self-governance, as the children learn, bluntly, how not to get caught. As such, "getting caught", and not the aggressive behaviour, is framed by children as the

danger.

The subject's responses to these systems of "reward" and "danger" vary according to individual, time, place and context, making the outcomes of these systems even more unpredictable. Just as contradictions are built into these systems, so are they built into the material environment as beneath and behind the play equipment that seemed at first unproblematic are dark hollows and half-hidden areas which create other sets of conditions, other bodily disciplines to be learned out of the sight of adults. This is the case with all elements of the site which, while scrupulously designed, created and managed by adults, nonetheless provide sub-spaces and opportunities with unexpected consequences for the subjectivities created onsite.

The playground as a whole can be conceptualized as an environment which offers particular "affordances". Within the playground's social, spatial and material structures are opportunities for children to actively alter their environment, seeking and creating "niches" for themselves as individuals and as groups. Niches provide opportunities for means of "living", as each niche implies a particular "kind of animal" (Gibson 1986:128). These "means of living" can be interpreted through the material findings of these sites, such as communality implicit in movement of tables, and the sharing of food suggested by the numerous crisp packets. Through the selection of the Den and its furnishing as a "niche", participants have the opportunity to create new locations of bodily training, new methods of constructing personal selves.

At Evergreen, den-making is spatially and socially marginal. Unlike the large-scale play equipment, the business of the dens is seen only through the "rubbish" it leaves behind, and so is easily dismissed by adults. The rare studies of den-making have either argued it as a process of children integrating themselves into the "natural" environment (Hart 1979), or of creating "order out of chaos" (Sobel 1993). An examination of the ordering systems in place at Evergreen, however, suggest den-making as a process of creating a different form of order out of found or appropriated materials (Edensor 2005), to facilitate specific modes of behaviour which adults are not privy to. As such, the creation and "means of living" of the Den niche are dependent upon learned strategies of secrecy as much as spatial and material affordances. Informants refused to discuss the Den, resorting to shrugs and contradictory phrases when they had previously proved

eloquent. These "places", then, had "no place" in discourse. The Den *was* "no place" (Charlotte, 10) in discourse. However, in spite of the children's refusal or inability to articulate these places to an adult the site itself, and their material changes and leavings, remain.

The Den area is continually re-created by children through use of a group vocabulary of materials, such as crisp packets and chairs, combined in specific ways. The placing of these site-appropriate objects "slightly out of place" by adult standards demonstrates an awareness of the dominant power structures notions of material belonging and the ability to twist them for the children's own purposes. Markus's assertion that the power of material symbols to communicate often lies in their use 'out of context' - that is in contexts other than those which the dominant cultural tradition would apply them" (Markus 1993:277) is seen through Chauncey's study of *Gay New York* (1995), where places of difference created by and for minority groups could be marked by those who know to read the signs. As these crisp packets and so on are only "slightly" out of place, on the ground rather than in the bin, adults do not "see" them as problematic, in fact, they hardly see them at all. Disregarded, they are only periodically cleared away. However, the adults are not opposed to the process of den-making, but in fact are directly implicated in the processes of refinement and renewal as children and adults articulate their views of place and ownership through the quiet moving around of these light, supposedly inconsequential pieces of "rubbish".

The niches that children might produce, the places-within-places which the juvenile human animal might "use or occupy" (Gibson 1986:128) will have been selected for the specific qualities and possibilities there - such as semi-enclosure, screening trees which permit illumination but limit observation, and small entrances suitable for the smaller members of the species and restrictive of the larger. Furthermore, the Den's accumulation of what adults term "rubbish" is suggestive of adult abandonment. These hidden spaces offer the same essential elements as the rest of Evergreen, but through their marginality are found opportunities for material re-ordering. Even so, the existence of these niches is known by adult play workers, who provide for their development through allocation of space and materials. Even if the crisp packets are interpreted as "rubbish" and cleared away, the clearing is sporadic. The site is left largely untouched, and even the occasional "clearances" serve to regenerate Den activity,

implicating the play workers in patterns of site renewal. As such, these elements of resistance or dissensive constructions are firmly and deliberately (re-)emplaced within Evergreen's systems of power.

The Den is subject to the playground's restrictions of permitted materials, meaning the furniture owned by the playground, items from the children's lunches, etc. Of all of the material allowed onsite each day, children retain control over their clothes and their lunches. When these are found unattended, they are either searched by adults for signs of ownership (clothing) or categorized as "waste" and cleared off site. These items, particularly the remnants from children's lunches, are often found in locations adults view as "inappropriate", a process they term "littering", but their placement is often repetitive and always deliberate. These items are particularly concentrated in the Den area, (re-)placed with a determined regularity along the Entrance paths and in a circle around the centre and so must be considered as integral parts of the children's claiming and creation of spaces within the adult-structured environment.

These materials can be viewed as potentially collective, or collectivising. The dense collection of lunch detritus implies a number of daily visitors at lunch time (when the food is returned to the children), suggesting the Den as a place where children eat together. Crisps, as one of the few food items that can be easily shared, implies a degree of communality. The tables and chairs found, dragged from the main building (along Entrance C) were heavy enough to require children to cooperate in their move. These items were thus collectively, forcibly relocated, their context changed from the adults' "control centre" of the main building to the Den area. It seems possible that these tables and chairs serve multiple functions as both material supports for community activities and as trophies.

Materials can thus serve a variety of purposes, according to their use and context. Like the human inhabitants of Evergreen, materials are vetted at the gate and, once in, move sociably throughout the interior spaces. Children's "place" within society is problematic, with James et al even arguing that children comprise "that status of personhood which is by definition often in the wrong place" (37). However, a child can be considered "out of place" even within a designated "children's landscape" such as Evergreen, as the gender segregation of the Forts displayed.

Materials, like people, are transformed by their context, as much as they are transformative of it. This co-constructive relationship between person(hood) and material surroundings can be seen through the systems of ordering that prevail over these place-within-places. They are not opposite those of the playground, but inherent to it.

The process of material transformation is no less than a process of self-construction. Foucault's study of the "arts of existence", or the means by which an individual might cultivate themselves as a social agent through a negotiation of privileged and privileging discourses of the subject and aesthetics, provides one means of analysis. The connection between aesthetics and subjectivity is seen in Foucault's assertion of "why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting?" (1997:131). The same might be asked of "playful" re-ordering of material surroundings, and of play itself.

Play offers a means of investigating the affordances of objects and space, in new combinations and contexts. The materials that had served to bring food into the site remain once the food is consumed, but are more than remnants of activity. They are part of that activity, their placement in a ring around the central area as deliberate as the consumption of the food that was inside. Part of the information they provide is archaeological, suggesting the variety and numbers of visitors at one particular point in the day. However, different foods offer different opportunities and while a variety of lunch items suggest a number of visitors, crisps carry the potential for sharing of food. Eating together and sharing food are two means of creating community. Conversely, ice creams are available only once a day and can be neither stored nor shared, so the limited window of consumption they provide and the rarity with which they are found indicates that the Den is also, at times, a location for the private consumption of high-prestige food items.

The tables and chairs were found on Monday and Tuesday in semi-recognizable formations, with one table pushed against the wall and two chairs tucked conversationally at one end. That these chairs were moved, but only slightly, suggests this area was used during Tuesday for a seated conversation. That the food packets were nowhere near the seating suggests a purpose other than dining. Directly behind these two chairs was a second table turned upside down, which did not move, and this large piece of furniture, kept literally topsy-turvy, implies a system of ordering

strange to adults. It seems that tables have affordances that adults no longer recognize. This is seen more clearly on Thursday when the tables are each pushed deep into the undergrowth, wedged tightly one on either side of a large tree and the chairs thrown into the hedge. These tables no longer serve as tables, but perhaps instead jumping platforms, low shelters, or something else I cannot guess. Another chair had joined the area, though it too was thrown into the bushes.

If we look for regularities within this "other" ordering system we find two primary features: the crisp packets placed along the entrance/exit paths and the presence, at the close of each day, of one centrally-placed item turned upside-down. One might speculate these crisp packets as material markers of the path, to help the individual child find his or her way back, or to mark the location out for others. People "age out" of childhood, both the discrete cultural classification and each internal "stage" of development. For forays into the Den, the presumed location of construction of the self and community relationships, it is perhaps comforting, perhaps enabling or even essential, to know that unnamed others have gone before you.

This suggestion that items are "left behind" in spaces to serve as markers for those that follow is, as McFadyen argues "a very archaeological way of interpreting (them)" (McFadyen 2007:123). She proposes instead that people do not live with their items in the landscape, but *through* them in the "connective dynamic through which space was made" (122). This archaeological space is thus a medium generated through shared practices, in which it is impossible to distinguish the work of one inhabitant from another. As such, we must consider what roles the materials of play may have served in the construction of the Den. It is impossible to tell whether these items were left in these locations as part, or to signify the end, of a particular game. Some elements, such as the upside-down table or the chairs that remain in the bushes, remain part of these locations for the next day's visitors. Furniture that is upside-down or tangled in the hedges are thus accepted in, and constructive of, the material ordering system of the Den. This demonstrates some of the ways in which this system, while used and created by a non-homogenous group of visitors we call "children", forms a coherently non-adult strategic ordering structure within the adult-defined context of Evergreen. Empty food packets and overturned furniture are part of the site's creation and use, and not simply "detritus" items left

behind when inhabitants moved on.

Crisp packets (and the less popular biscuits) are readily available materials and have a deeply entrenched place in the adults' material order as "rubbish". Through the possibilities they offer for sharing of food we can consider the communal and communizing possibilities of this particular materiality in creation of place. For adults, these items are glossed unequivocally as "rubbish" which, by definition, has already served its purpose and is "out of place". That children choose to give these items new purpose demonstrates one method of transforming materials through context. The path itself is semi-public, guiding the new visitor along a trail of appropriated items to the Den where we see a range of items forming a new and subversive ordering system. As such, these crisp packets are not "rubbish" or "out of place" but working still, not just "in place" but constructive of that place's perimeters.

In searching the found materials of play for patterns of use, we begin to construct a narrative of place which accounts for both cyclical and linear directionalities of the Den within the larger rhythms of Evergreen. The repetition with which crisp packets were laid along the path indicates an intentionality, a determination towards consistency of placement. The Den area can be studied as a site for the exploration and articulation of child agency, where interference by the external adult framework is minimized. It is not known which groups or ages use this place, and if subversion is literally "built in" then it is unwise to speculate based on observed behaviour elsewhere. The group of "children" is not homogeneous, so it is dangerous to presume the existence of a "child's style" of building, or "children's preferences". What is known is that the site, when re-ordered, forms a new location of difference within the coherent adult-defined landscape of Evergreen. Markus argues the importance of "style" in communicating subculture, saying that it is instrumental in group definition and boundary maintenance" (Markus 1993:277). For many minority groups, places of refuge enable the construction of new and exploratory or celebratory identities, as locations where psychic spaces excluded from dominant discourse might be explored. For children "impropriety" in thought or deed might include a propensity to enjoy fear, power or sexuality - those states of being conceptually silenced in the discourse of modern childhood.

These sites have histories, which while deliberately obscured by the "writers" still leave clues as to the cyclical and linear drives to action. Children find these places, use them, leave them, and "find" them again. These repetitive activities have formative consequences for the children who perform them creating a co-constructive relationship between self and place. The process of writing this narrative involves an exploration of the site, its materials and its possibilities. Movements of furniture and changes in loose materials can suggest the number of visitors, but also changes in the ways these visitors engage with the site and use the materials to hand to obscure, subvert and transform dominant systems of ordering. Revisiting the Den offers opportunities to train the body in new bodily disciplines through repetition or the discovery of unexpected material affordances. The resulting layering of materialities and associations means that, with each visit, both site and visitor are perpetually new. The subjectivities forged here, away from the adults' eyes, are thus necessarily fluid, adaptable and subversive, and yet a direct consequence of the fixed structure and curricula they offer.

There seems to be a deliberate suggestion of privacy in the overturning of chairs, as if the materials themselves resist facile interpretation. However, if furniture is maintained in its upside-down position and not flipped to "close" a space (as seen with the table and chairs in the hedge) then its purpose is not one of closing the space, but of claiming it. A piece of furniture, itself dragged from the adult enclave of the central building, cannot serve its adult prescribed purpose when upside-down. Wilkie's 2000 study in historical archaeology of toys as "dialogues of control and resistance" (101) demonstrates one means of understanding the deliberately subverted items normally under adult control. Notwithstanding other activities that doing so may enable, flipping furniture demonstrates a rejection of adult interpretations, demanding a broader exploration of the object's material affordances. Whatever the order established in the Dens, turned furniture proclaims that it is "not-adult", that it is something different.

In this subversive ordering system certain "dangers" and "rewards" are implicit. Assuming that this area is used for behaviour which is not permitted or even possible under adult supervision, the likeliest "danger" seems to be that of being "caught". Even if technically no prohibited behaviour was being exhibited, it seems that the purpose of the Den as a space of child-directed play cannot be fulfilled in the presence of an adult. As such, the likeliest "reward" would be the

opportunity to explore states of being that are outside of the "ideal childhood" encouraged by the site, and to form a place for the construction of alternate selves, of subversive subjectivities. These subjectivities, like their spaces, are shaped by dark hollows in dominant legislation and the discourse of adult power. They are the "absent presences" of site behaviours, formed by neighbouring acts.

If we return to the question of child aggression, we can see how behaviour can be permitted in one context and prohibited in another. However, from the stout branches shorn of twigs that had clearly been bashed together, some form of aggressive behaviour was occurring in the Woods. The Woods was also the location of sexualized bullying by some older boys of a "special needs" boy, who, when found by adults, was naked and being laughed at. This kind of behaviour could only happen out of adult supervision, and was located in the Woods both as a co-constructive result of this area's conceptualization as one of fear and dark unpredictability.

Sexuality in childhood is a classic example of this absent presence. The prohibition on adult application of sunscreen on children delineates "proper" and "improper" adult-child physical interactions, framing one as sexual and others (such as wrestling or hand-holding) as not. This distinction is not explained, but is formed by a collusion between workers and guardians. Similarly, Nina's (6) playful grabbing at my breasts may have been, for her, primarily an exploration of adult gendered bodies, but my quick refusal of this marked it as inappropriate without explaining why. As such, any similar interactions between children would probably occur out of adult supervision. Thus sexual identities are framed in, and by, places of privacy, becoming subversive in the process. Furthermore, children are exposed to a wide variety of social cues and information, and locations such as the Den may be the only place for them to discuss their findings with other children out of adult hearing (see Sleek 1998). When two boys were overheard engaged in sexual bragging behaviour they were not in the Den but standing on the platform above as one announced that he had "kissed (his) girlfriend' everywhere" and the other replied he had "kissed (his own) girlfriend's bum". Perhaps too young to have discovered the Den, they were nonetheless taking advantage of the privacy offered by that remote corner of the site to construct newly boastful, sexually social selves.

Rose's concept of personhood was that which is invented "at the multitude of points of intersection between practices for the government of others and techniques for the government of oneself" (Rose 1996:13) or, alternatively, through a continual (re-)negotiation of self and environment. Through elimination of an "essential" interiority, Rose goes on to suggest ways in which a multiplicity of "selves" can be created, using Deleuze's concept of "folding". This idea demonstrates how that which is "inside" is "merely an infolding of an exterior" as "folds incorporate without totalizing, internalize without unifying, connect together discontinuously in the form of pleats making surfaces, spaces, flows and relations" (ibid:37). Through a complete collapse of the "universal" or "natural child" we can see how the individual child is composed of these layered authorities, arts and practices, creating complex and shifting subjectivities.

An element of power is implicit in use of the Den area, both power over self to conquer initial fears and power over place through material manipulation. The mere fact of choosing to act unobserved is rebellious and this secrecy provides actors with the chance to explore their own power outside of adult control and knowledge. While adults still define the context of these interactions, they do not define its content and the power to learn new bodily disciplines of and in secrecy is perhaps the greatest "reward" the Den has to offer. As such, the legislation against certain behaviours does not end their practice. The new subjectivities that arise are opportunistic in their material appropriation, observant of gaps in adult surveillance and primed with a set of prohibited activities to explore and (re-)define. These new subjectivities are thus subversive on multiple fronts, each of which is a direct result of the structures of power which define the site's materiality and activity and while adults may seek to "punish" their display they are only adding to their illicit appeal.

While we have seen some of the disciplinary practices employed by Evergreen in pursuit and creation of a "childhood" ideal, it is worth examining the consequences of wider trends towards actuarial methods of control, as identified by Simon (1988). These methods are seen in the social and legal context within which Evergreen operates, primarily concealed within the discourse of "risk management". However, as Evergreen itself also categorizes the "children" as a group and manages them accordingly, actuarial practices are also employed onsite as a means of determining the children's methods of self-organization and sense of belonging.

Simon's examination of the actuarial method demonstrates how groups can be legislated through rationalization and naturalization of that group, resulting in a legally disadvantaged individuality. Instead of altering individual behaviour, as disciplinary practices do, the actuarial regime "alters the physical and social structures within which individuals behave". This move from normalization to accommodation "increases the efficiency of power" (Simon 1988:774). This collectivization of a culturally constructed group is examined by Rose, in his study of "democratic" rule, which he defines as rule "through (the subjects') freedoms, their choices, their solidarities rather than despite these" (Rose 1996:19). The consequences for this process is effectively the subversion of subversion, or the "turning (of) subjects, their motivations and interrelations, from potential sites of resistance to rule into allies of rule" (ibid:20). The spatial, material and social allotment by play workers for sites of alternative ordering systems serves to contain them within the dominant structure. What was inevitable is accommodated, and even incorporated in radical play theory's propanance of the "inventive" child, the "creative" or "free-thinking" child. Certain forms of dissension are, it seems, not only accepted but covertly co-created.

Some, however, are not. When the dissentive subjectivities constructed through the Den or Woods areas clash with the site's dominant ideals of "childhood" punishment generally takes the form of temporary exile of individuals to the gate. This was observed in fieldwork when children were "caught" behaving aggressively or employing "obscene" language or jokes. One might speculate that this effectively re-affirms the bonds between socially and spatially marginalized behaviours - and of action and actor. As such, the "secretive" subjectivities explored are folded all the more tightly into the individual, with "marginalized" external selves in effect becoming those which are pleated inside most deeply.

Children have long been collectivized in social discourse and actuarial practices. Spatial and material provisions for demonstrate an attempt to shape the "developing" bodily subjectivities of the children under its control into the ideal "child" through facilities for play. However, beneath and behind the large-scale equipment at Evergreen are areas of potential subversion, where children can explore the autonomy provided by learned practices of secrecy. As children are

“beings” and not “becomings” their material leavings must be studied as evidence of current negotiations of place, power and self, conducted with the tools at their disposal. These negotiations are accommodated, however, by the social and physical structures of adult power, and so the alternative ordering systems and subjectivities created by children are part of an ongoing narrative of subversion and allowances. The adults’ construction of childhood aims for the surgical removal of problematic elements such as violence, sexuality and skills of secrecy, but through these attempts at removal more secretive “places” are created “beneath and behind” public discourse. As such, the responsive explorations of these discursive hollows can have unintended consequences for onsite activities. Young social actors construct multiple, shifting, in-folded “selves”, and attempts to marginalize “inappropriate” behaviours may, instead, press these “folds” of socially marginalized selves deeper within the individual. The materialities of play provide a means of examining the individual’s navigation of dominant structures of power, their ordering systems and inherent shadowed parts, and how the social actor might thus construct a fluid collation of subjectivities, in other words, a “self”.

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