CHAPTER 1

Children's Playground Games in the New Media Age

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Introduction: CHILDHOOD, CHILDLORE AND THE MEDIA

The generally-held opinion, both inside and outside academic circles, was that children no longer cherished their traditional lore. We were told that the young had lost the power of entertaining themselves; that the cinema, the wireless, and television had become the focus of their attention; and that we had started our investigation fifty years too late. (Opie & Opie, 1959: v)

This book emerges from a project whose central question was the relationship between children's traditional play cultures and their media-based play, a question raised by the Opies over fifty years ago. Its objects of investigation have been constructed to explore this relationship in various different ways, described more fully below and in the chapters of this book[1]. Briefly, we have undertaken five activities. We have digitized, catalogued and selectively analysed the sound recordings of Iona and Peter Opie in the National Sound Archive at the British Library, recordings of children's playground and street games from the 1970s and 80s. We have conducted a two-year ethnographic study of play and games in two primary school playgrounds in the UK, one in London, one in Sheffield. We have developed a website at the British Library (www.bl.uk/playtimes), which presents examples of games over the last century, including selections from both the Opie archive and our own study. We

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[1] The project was funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council under the Beyond Text programme. It was entitled 'Children's Playground Games and Songs in the New Media Age', and ran from April 2009 to May 2011.

have made a documentary film of the games played in these two playgrounds. Finally, we have developed a proof-of-concept prototype computer game adaptation which both captures children's physical play and allows them to play against the computer.

The intention has been to build on the pioneering work of the Opies, and re-present their audio recordings for new and old audiences; and to extend and add to the body of work which they and others have carried out over the last sixty years or so. The project carries the study of oral transmission into the cultural moment of the digital age, where the fluidity, performativity and inventiveness of playground games, the computer game console and the participatory internet co-exist and interpenetrate.

This chapter will briefly consider the history of popular and academic perceptions of children's playground games, songs and rhymes, in relation to changing constructions of childhood and of the agency of children. It will then describe the research project which lies behind the book, before moving on to propose three broad categories to help identify what might be specific to children's games in the age of new media.

In the academic field, children's folklore has been an object of study for over a hundred and fifty years, with researchers recognising playground games and clapping and skipping songs as important cultural texts. Early collections enact a desire to preserve and protect traditional rhymes and games (Halliwell 1842/9; Gomme 1894/8), while more recent ones emphasise the inventiveness and richness of an oral tradition sustained by children alone (Opie and Opie, 1959, 1969, 1985).

A notable theme of this research is what the Opies call the 'wear and repair during transmission' (1959). Studies note the interplay between historical continuities and the continual change through which playground lore responds to contemporary cultural preoccupations. Playground lore reflects 'continuity and change, stability and variation, dynamism and conservatism' (Bishop and Curtis, 2001: 10). We have explored these paradoxes of oral culture, setting them against analogous forms of preservation and rapid change in the new media of the digital age.

Children's playground games have been investigated from various perspectives: as forms of identity and socialisation (James, 1993); as linguistic patterns (Crystal, 1998); as informal literacies (Grugeon, 1988); as musical and compositional practice (Marsh, 2008); as forms of creative learning (Bishop and Curtis, 2001), and, of course, as play (Sutton-Smith, 1995; 2001). However, our team is multi-disciplinary, including specialisms in folklore and musico-ethnology, media and cultural studies, software design, history and sociolinguistics. This has given us the (perhaps unprecedented) opportunity to conduct a conversation about the phenomena of play from several different perspectives, applying different analytical and theoretical approaches. While we would not pretend to have produced some kind of ideal inter-disciplinary synthesis, we can at least claim to have made a sustained effort to attend to the many different aspects of playground culture that we have found, in ways that any one of these disciplines would have found impossible.

Importantly for our research, although many collections record the integration of popular cultural references (pop songs, advertising jingles, theme tunes, soap operas and other genres) into games and songs, the evolving relation of playground lore to the media cultures of contemporary childhood has been under-researched. Indeed, there has been a

long-standing critique of the infiltration of popular and commercial culture in children's play (Elkind, 2006; Postman, 1983). However, the Opies found productive connections between the lore of the playground and the practices of children's media culture; while later scholars have also emphasised the importance of media cultures (eg Marsh, 2001; Bishop et al, 2006). Our research develops this theme, finding evidence of a rich expansion of pretend play drawing on the landscape of new media, such as dramatic games which incorporate the structures, imagery and rule-systems of computer games.

THE WORK OF THE PROJECT

The project has five major outcomes, which are represented in various ways across the chapters of this book.

The British Library digital archive

The digital archive includes *The Opie Collection of Children's Games and Songs,* now fully annotated and catalogued, and available as streamed audio to researchers worldwide at www.bl.uk/sounds.

This collection of recordings contains a good deal of material never published before, revealing some new themes: the more extreme scatological and taboo-busting songs and rhymes the Opies collected; the wide range of variations on 'classic' singing games; and many examples of the media influences that informed the culture of play. These new themes form the subject of chapter 2, in which Jopson, Burn and Robinson explore the significance of selected unpublished material in the archive.

We have also added a wide variety of material from the ethnographic studies conducted during the project, which document playground games in two playgrounds, in the UK cities of Sheffield and London. This material represents perhaps the most sustained ethnographic investigation of playground play, including not only new games, songs and rhymes but also documentation of the wider contexts of play.

We have extended the archive beyond our original plans, however. A very productive aspect of the project has been our contact with other researchers in this field. Kathryn Marsh, of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and author of *The Musical Playground* (Marsh, 2008) visited the UK to give a seminar and act as discussant for our Interim Conference at the London Knowledge Lab. She has subsequently generously donated her substantial collection of games and songs, from several different countries (including the UK), to our archive.

Taken as a whole, then, this archive has exceeded our original aims, promising to become an important international hub of material for future researchers. It combines historical depth, from the 1970s to the present day, with international reach, including games from Australia, the UK, America, and Scandinavia.

The Ethnographic study

The ethnographic studies have been conducted over the two years of the project (April 2009 to May 2011) in our two partner primary schools. Monteney Primary School in Sheffield serves a working class community in the north-west of the city and there are

extensive grounds surrounding the school building. It has 450 pupils. Its most recent Ofsted[2] report notes that the school: '…is in an area of significant social and economic deprivation with above average levels of free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language' (Ofsted, 2007). Christopher Hatton Primary School is on the edge of the Clerkenwell district of London, serving a multiethnic community. During the project, the school was attended by 220 children, of whom about 40% were entitled to free school meals. There were at least twenty 'minority ethnic groups', and about 68% of the children were listed as coming from families in which the first language was not English. Indeed there were so many different languages among the school population that, on the whole, English prevailed as the common language in the playground. Nevertheless, there occasional instances of younger children using Bangla and, from discussions with children themselves, it was apparent that, often, their home language was a significant and continuing aspect of their self-identities. For some, linguistic identifications were also entwined with refugee status (about 26% of the school population).

The ethnographic study has in many ways extended the observation and recording of play to be found in the history of this field of study. It has recorded many instances of games, songs and rhymes recognisable as latter-day versions of the Opie 'canon', demonstrating continuity as well as change. Versions of many of the clapping games published in *The Singing Game* were found, as well as examples of counting-out rhymes, skipping games, chasing games and ball games. At the same time, it was clear that some genres had diminished: hopscotch, conkers and French skipping, for example (though reports of hopscotch were documented on the Sheffield playground).

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[2] Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) is the independent inspection service for schools in England, reporting directly to Parliament.

Meanwhile, the study found many new instances of play, documenting in particular a rich variety of play informed by children's media cultures (computer games, reality TV, pop songs, musicals and films), and pretend play enacting scenarios which often intermingle domestic and fantasy settings: families, superheroes, fairies, witches and zombies. The relationship between playground play and children's media cultures is explored in chapter 5, in which Jackie Marsh considers the connection between children's online and offline play; and chapter 6, in which Rebekah Willett analyses the forms and functions of media references in playground games.

At the same time, the ethnographers have worked to document the broader context of play, its topographies, temporalities, resources and social functions. This wider context has produced evidence of the contested nature of some aspects of play, the anxiety expressed by adults over certain themes perceived as risky, and the forms of regulation instigated as a consequence. These topics are the subject of Chris Richards' inquiry in chapter 4.

The studies have also conducted surveys of the children in the two schools, partly to get a sense of the favourite games of *all* the children (rather than just the ones who are filmed or interviewed); and partly to get a picture of the media cultures that lie beyond the playground, in children's media consumption at home.

The ethnographers have worked with panels of children during the project, representing all the ages and classes in each school. The researchers' aim was to work with these panels as researchers, giving them Flip video cameras to record their own play and interview their fellow pupils. This approach recognizes that they are social actors who can

play an active role in projects relating to their cultural worlds (eg James and Prout, 1990). This approach has proved successful, and the videos collected by the children have added substantially to those made by the researchers.

The website: Playtimes: a century of children's playground games and rhymes.

The website was intended to display selections from the Opie archive alongside samples of play video-recorded during the ethnographic studies, in order to represent the historical changes and continuities evident across the Opie collection and today's playgrounds. In the event, we have discovered new material during the project which has significantly enhanced the content of the website, such as archive film from the British Film Institute, expanding the historical scope of the site to the century indicated in the name. Most importantly, we have collaborated with the Bodleian Library in Oxford, to whom the Opies donated their manuscript archive; and the Pitts Rivers museum, also in Oxford, which holds an important collection of the folklorist and photographer Father Damian Webb. The Bodleian collection provided valuable examples of written accounts of games sent by children and teachers to the Opies; while the Damian Webb collection provided examples of high-quality audio recordings from the mid-twentieth century, as well as strikingly beautiful black-and-white photographs of children at play.

FIGURE 1.1: caption: Photograph by Father Damian Webb, featured on the Playtimes website. By kind permission of the Pitt Rivers museum.

The design of the website has been an innovative form of library exhibition, in terms of the extensive consultation carried out with children in our partner schools. We have held workshops with the panels of children in the schools (essentially the school councils, representing all classes), and have involved them in three ways: as researchers, designers and curators. They have added significantly to the research and collection of their own games, making their own videos and interviews. They have contributed concept drawings for the visual design and navigational structure of the website. They have produced animations which introduce the nine categories of play in the children's route through the site, serving as a form of curatorial interpretation (Potter, 2009). The nature of these forms of research, (re)presentation, and interpretation are considered by John Potter in chapter 8, employing the metaphor of curation to theorise the voice of the child in these processes.

FIGURE 1.2: caption: The children's home page of the Playtimes site. Design by Bjorn Rune Lie.

The Game-Catcher prototype

The 'Game Catcher' adapts the motion sensitive videogame controllers of the Nintendo Wii and Microsoft Kinect to create an application which allows the recording, playback, archiving and analysis of playground games in 3D. Chapter 7, by Grethe Mitchell, considers the relationship between playground games and the kinesic games of platforms such as Wii and Kinect, both in terms of their ludic structures and in terms of their location in children's cultural lives.

The Game-Catcher had two main aims. One was to develop a proof of concept of a system which would provide researchers in the arts and humanities with new and improved ways of archiving and analysing movement-based activities. The archiving of playground games currently relies upon video (or previously, as in the Opie and Webb collections, upon audio recording supplemented by still photographs). These provide an incomplete record – even video only records the events from a single viewpoint and can therefore leave details obscured or off-screen. The Game Catcher avoids these shortcomings by recording the position in 3D space of every joint. By recording the raw data, the movement can then be viewed from any angle and any distance and other alternative forms of visualisation – for instance tracing the path taken by the hands throughout the entire game – also become possible.

In parallel with this, the Game Catcher had a second aim, which was to develop a new and innovative type of computer game. This exercise is partly intended as a form of cultural intervention. We have seen how, in popular discourse, 'traditional' games and songs are often opposed to electronic or computer games which are seen to embody suspect, sedentary forms of play. By developing a computer game version of a playground clapping game, we were able to explore the tensions between these fields, as well as the areas for overlap and both actual and potential synergies. In this regard, clapping games were chosen as they contain fast movement within a constrained physical space, thereby offering a suitable level of technical challenge.

We have also seen, in the ethnographic studies, how experiences of computer games migrate into physical games on the playground. The Game-Catcher reverses this process, asking what it would be like for physical games to become computer games. Although

children's media play is often seen as distinct from, even antagonistic to what are perceived as more traditional forms of play, these traditional forms are in many ways similar to the ways in which play is structured in computer games. They are routinised, formulaic, rule-governed, finely-balanced between accessibility and challenge, and often incorporate narrative elements.

The children's panels were involved in testing prototype versions, experimenting with different kinds of movements both related to games and to other forms such as dance; and making suggestions for further development of the prototype.

The Game Catcher was developed with open source software and is written in the programming language, Processing. The development team has made the application available as an open source resource for future researchers and game-designers.

The documentary film

The 50 minute documentary film *Ipi-dipi-dation, My Generation* draws on ethnographic and observational methods and provides a detailed overview of playground culture and the diversity and variety of forms of play in the two primary school playgrounds in London and Sheffield. In doing so it follows in the tradition of filmic and photographic records of children's games, such as *The Dusty Bluebells*, the 1971 film of Belfast children's street games by David Hammond.

The documentary film, like the rest of our project, updates the picture, showing how children draw both on the long historical tradition of games passed from child to child,

generation to generation; and also on the resources of their own contemporary media cultures. Like the website and the playground research, the film aims to give children's voices the dominant role in describing and interpreting their play.

The making of the documentary is influenced by ethnographic and anthropological film practices and the work of film makers like Frederick Wiseman, where the structure and narrative of the film emerges from the recorded material, rather than filming with a preconceived idea of storyline or result. The capture of activities of play is therefore mainly observational although a deliberate choice was also made not to hide the presence of the film maker – whose voice can be heard in the film. In line with the observational nature of the film and with the aim of communicating the ephemeral and sometimes chaotic nature of play, activities were filmed as they occurred - without staging.

The film maker was also keen to avoid the idealisation of children's play. Rather than using an adult voiceover, for instance, the documentary employs interviews with the children themselves (filmed over the course of two years) to provide commentary and interpretation. This acknowledges that children have insights into their own culture, and can speak reflectively about their play.

In the language of film and the moving image, camera placement and height is meaningful. For instance, looking down onto someone from a higher position indicates a relationship of power. In filming the documentary, careful attention was paid to these relationships. For example, the placement of the camera in terms of height and position ensured that the subjects of the documentary (children) would be viewed as equivalent in height and size to the audience. This flattens out the power relations often inherent in the

representation of children, and reinforces the idea of children as valid interlocutors of their own experience and culture.

The nature of this form of representation, and the part children themselves might play in it, is the subject of Grethe Mitchell's essay in chapter 9, which locates the making of the film both in traditions of documentary representations of children's play through the twentieth century, and in recent traditions of visual ethnography.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF PLAY

Our exploration of the Opie Collection has produced two important benefits. Firstly, it has given a detailed sense of what it was like for Iona Opie and her colleagues to research children's games during the 1970s and 80s. It confirms the status of the work as substantial ethnography, as a contribution to the landscape of childhood studies as it is today, and as a body of data even more wide-ranging than the Opies' publications might suggest.

Secondly, it provides evidence for certain aspects of the social and cultural lives of children over these decades. While we have not conducted a formal comparative study, our project must consider histories of play in relation to the evidence of the Opie archive and of our own data. Such a history might look at how contemporary childhoods differ from the decades when the Opies conducted their research. Family structures are more dynamic, technological advances have transformed communicative practices between family members and peers, children are the focus for more intense market research and a clearer target for the activities of commercial companies than in previous generations. The boundaries between various phases of childhood and adulthood are more diffuse – an example of this is the

concept of 'tweenhood', which blurs the boundary between early childhood and youth (Willett, 2006). One might assume that children are also much stronger social agents, with greater control over aspects of their lives than in previous generations; and in some ways, this is the case. Children have access to more choices in relation to leisure activities, subject to socio-economic status, and some technologies afford them greater independence from adults than in previous eras.

Nonetheless, there are aspects of childhood which have become more constrained since the mid-twentieth century. Recent decades have seen the increased institutionalisation of the child, through standardised approaches to education and the extension of the welfare state into previously marginal areas of childcare and health, with the result that there is both increased provision in these areas for families living in areas of low socio-economic status, in addition to increased surveillance from a range of professionals. Children are the focus of much greater efforts to control their access to environments outside the home, with many parents and carers reluctant to allow children to play freely on the street or community areas. These dichotomies and contradictions frame the work of our study and have informed our understanding of how contemporary childhoods are literally played out in the spaces of school grounds.

In terms of perceptions of children's play, the cultures of the playground and the street have always been objects of adult concern. Ever since children's games, songs, rhymes, rituals and objects of play were first documented in the mid-nineteenth[th] century, there have been concerns over their vulnerability to a succession of perceived threats. Campaigners for children's singing games in the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century sought to document and reintroduce traditional games into schools, fearful that the twin dangers of

industrialisation and urbanization were killing them off (Roud, 2010). Research since then has established beyond doubt, however, that this culture is much more robust than is often supposed; and the work of the Opies has been, perhaps, the most visible effort in making the case for this persistence of cultural tradition.

Nevertheless, in spite of the research evidence to the contrary, perceptions of disappearing play continue. In April 2006, the UK tabloid newspaper The Daily Express carried the headline "Skipping? Hopscotch? Games are a mystery to the iPod generation". The article continued to report a research project conducted by the Sainsbury's supermarket chain, a poll of 2000 parents and families which purported to find that traditional games had entirely disappeared and children now ate crisps, played with technological gadgets and hung around shops. This perception can be seen as part of a wider popular anxiety about 'toxic childhood', which connect worries about health, sexuality and socialisation with obvious scapegoats, in particular changing cultures and technologies of media production and consumption (eg Palmer, S, 2007).

A central theme in the anxiety about childhood play is the question of children's agency. Successive social constructions of childhood imagine children as vulnerable, whether from a position of innocence or original sin (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998; Buckingham, 2000). Romantic fantasies of childhood attribute a greater degree of agency, as in Rousseau's or Blake's child-figures. But not until quite recently have researchers sought empirical evidence for childhood as a powerful cultural phenomenon, its rules, social practices and culture to a large degree created by children. The Opies themselves were early advocates of this view, perceiving the childlore of street and playground as a kind of folk art, and insisting on the self-sufficiency of children's culture, deriving their argument from detailed studies of

play and games which anticipate the ethnographic approaches of later scholars (see Jopson et al, Chapter 2). These arguments are reviewed in the new sociology of childhood. James, Jenks and Prout, for example, subsume the Opies' argument within an anthropological approach they term *the tribal child*, and which they set against other approaches, most conspicuously against a developmental approach which appears irreconcileable with that of the Opies; and indeed, scholars in the field of folklore studies have continued to resist the developmental model (Bishop and Curtis, 2000; Sutton-Smith, 2001).

In relation to our central research question, the Opie collection offers confirmation that children at that time happily integrated knowledge, references and performances from their media cultures into the vernacular culture of the playground, street and council estate (see Chapter 2). The Bay City Rollers, Gary Glitter, Lena Zavaroni and Abba jostle with the mutations of older popular cultures long since incorporated into the oral tradition inherited by these children: folksong, nursery rhyme, Christmas carols, music-hall and film sound-track.

More generally, there is evidence of less-regulated play, such as the street play in Chelsea, where transgressive forms of banter and rhyme challenge conventional norms of social behaviour; though also of the beginnings of more structured play provision, such as the play-workers interviewed in Stepney Green, who describe how they seek to re-introduce rhymes from their own childhood memories into the play of the children in their charge, something we also found in the two playgrounds we researched in this project.

There is also evidence of the cultural effects of mobile populations: of children who move school to find that their version of a song or game is not accepted by the new school; of children in the American school in London who have brought new versions of well-known

classics from Massachussetts (see Chapter 2 for more detail). These are less extreme forms of mobility than those experienced by the children in more recent studies, including our own, however. There is no evidence of the complex mixes of ethnic groups of the kind we found on the playground in London; or that researchers between the Opies and our project have found, such as Marsh's study of Punjabi girls in the Midlands playing clapping games to songs from Hindi films (Marsh, 2010). In this respect, cultural influences can be expected to have widened dramatically since the waves of economic and refugee migration in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Oddly, however, two factors conspire against such variety being universally apparent. One is the balance of languages and ethnicities in the playground: where there is no dominant language or ethnic group, English remains the lingua franca, as was the case in both playgrounds we studied. The other is the inclination of migrant children to adopt the cultural styles of the host community – or indeed the global media cultures which can be possessed by all, as a recent study of migrant children's cultural expression showed across several European states (de Block et al, 2005).

While children – then and now – might be differentiated by ethnicity and language, they are also clearly differentiated by social class. While the Opies do not develop a political theory of social class in relation to play cultures, their writing contains a distinct discourse of class culture and their efforts to 'become familiar with the argot which the kids still speak in London's alleyways and tenement courts' (1959: v). Similarly, in their choice of a sample which they intend to be 'representative of the child population as a whole', they firmly state that it does not include 'the lore current among children in the private, fee-charging establishments' (1959: vii). Clearly they have worked hard to explore the public playgrounds of streets and council estates, just as Damian Webb did in his photographic and audio recording of play in Wigan and Salford. Their keen awareness of social distinction, especially

in urban contexts, infuses their commentary; and a number of the recordings suggest where the resistance of working-class children to regulatory regimes is most marked: through transgressive forms of language and embodied play at odds with the schooling that attempts to shape them, socially, morally and even physically. Chapter 2 discusses the more extreme forms of scatological and sexual reference and performance by children in a Chelsea housing estate and recalls Stallybrass and White's (1986) account of how the body of the working-class child is forced to conform to bourgeois ideals of cleanliness and propriety in the 19th century city (1986: 144).

In some respects, then, the cultural constraints of social class might be seen as more marked at the time of the Opies' research, and the efforts of play to assert a defiantly different narrative and posture more evident. Certainly, in 2009-11 in Sheffield and London, we did not find such distinctively transgressive forms of language and play.

However, there is some evidence in our study that children enjoyed certain freedoms in the mid-twentieth century that have declined significantly in the early twenty-first century. In particular, changes in the social spaces of play are observed historically in Richards' chapter in this volume, through a process of critical memory, recalling his own play as a boy in the 1950s and 60s, and following themes of 'rough play' and its sites through to the playgrounds he studies in this project. A conspicuous difference between our observation of playgrounds and the material in the Opie collection is that we have focused on school playgrounds while the Opies' work includes material recorded in public playgrounds and housing estates. While we did not seek out play in other areas, the evidence seems to be that street play has declined considerably, and playgrounds, whether school or public, have increased in importance as sites for play. In general, then, sites for play over the last century

have become increasingly urban, constrained, planned, regulated and overseen. The general motive for this is the protection of children, firstly, and the designed provision for play, secondly. These seem to be self-evidently good things: and indeed it is true that the playgrounds we observed were more imaginatively-planned spaces for play than the bare tarmac playgrounds observed by the Opies. The paradox, however, is that children's imaginative play thrives on unpromising contexts, on hidden nooks and crannies, on secret codes and languages. Too much planning, provision, regulation, oversight may constrain rather than enable play.

The other great growth site for play, which we have surveyed but not observed directly, is the bedroom. Children's media cultures are considerably richer than they were when the Opies' research was conducted, and our survey of the children in the two schools reveals extensive access to television, DVDs, radio, communication technologies, a variety of computer game consoles, and increasingly mobile phones. By contrast, street play has clearly declined under the pressure of adult anxiety about a variety of perceived and actual dangers, so that the abundance of, for example, adult-targeted pranks like Knock-Down Ginger (Opie & Opie, 1959: 378) has given way to more highly-regulated and media-derived annual rituals such as Trick-or-treating (Roud, 2010).

The histories of childhood and play considered so far extend over decades and generations, revealing changes in childhood as a *permanent segment of society* as opposed to changes in childhood as a *generational unit*, inhabited temporarily by individuals (Quortrup, 2009). Studies like ours are always caught between these larger patterns of social change, and the smaller temporal sequences that make up the experiences of individual children. Both of these patterns inform the play which we might be tempted to see as rooted purely in

the contemporary moment. For one thing, this moment is thick with historical resonances. Bourdieu's notion of habitus, a way in which we might seek to understand the meeting of social structures and physical play, is described by him as 'embodied history, internalized as second nature and so forgotten as history . . . the active present of the whole past of which it is the product' (1990: 56).

Bourdieu's notion of habitus as forgotten history has strong resonances for the observations made in our ethnographic research. The frequent disclaimers by children of any history of the game and song texts; unselfconscious moves from one enthusiasm, craze, even friendship group to the next; the rapid explosions of particular games and their equally rapid disappearance – all these chime with Bourdieu's view of habitus as a relation between the present conditions which produce its actions and the past conditions which generated its set of dispositions.

Both these observations of day-to-day change in the playground and Bourdieu's idea allow for what we can call micro-histories. The salient periods of time here are not, then (or not only) those of the social histories noted above, applied to mass populations and dealing in decades and centuries. Rather, they attend to the temporalities of childhood, a phrase is borrowed from James, Jenks and Prout, who consider how childhood is defined and structured in certain ways by time (1998: chapter 4). They point out the definition of childhood as a stage in the life course, and as a generational category. They explore ways in which the time of children is structured institutionally, in families, schools and hospitals, for example. Finally, they consider how time is experienced by children themselves, a theme which has arisen many times in our research, from observed instances of play as ways of dealing with the temporal constraints of the school day, to children's perceptions of time and

history. In addition to James, Jenks and Prout's temporalities, we can add those documented by scholars of childlore. The Opies constructed a 'Children's Calendar', showing how different times of the year, festivals and holidays were occasion for specific rituals, games and customs (Opie & Opie, 1959); while Roud develops the same structure with more recent examples (Roud, 2010).

Finally, we need to consider how the voice of the child may be represented in society, and more particularly for our purpose in the institutions that oversee the conditions of and provision for play. Schools are arguably more visibly attentive to the voices and opinions of children than in the 1970's, as a general effect of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with initiatives in research and practice framed around notions of 'pupil voice' (Fielding, 2009; Potter, 2012). Our project has sought to engage with this developing attention to children's agency as researchers, designers and curators, as described in the previous section. We can observe, then, how children are able to consider and identify some of the processes and social functions of play, and engage in the act of critical reflection on the experience of childhood.

These changes over the last half century or more provide a general background to the social context of play. The next section will move on to offer three categories which identify specific features of children's games in relation to new media, while also indicating how they connect with older practices in children's play and media cultures.

CULTURAL REHEARSAL

The OED has two meanings for rehearsal. The first includes 'a recounting or recital; a repetition of words or statements; the second includes 'the practising of a play or musical composition preparatory to performing it in public; a private meeting of actors or performers held for this purpose'.

These meanings capture something of the ambiguity of children's perennial recycling, remaking, repetition and revision of games, songs and rhymes. They capture first of all the tension between forms of cultural expression which settle over time in particular texts, structures, formulae; and those which employ new elements. This dialectic relation between sedimentation and innovation is familiar in the philosophy of language. Merleau-Ponty, for example, develops an extensive argument that sedimented forms of language become an essential element of lived language: the repositories and residues of sedimented language become the context for creativity in speaking and expressing (Bourgeois, 2002: 370). In this respect, 'rehearsal' allows for an engagement with the textual phenomena of variation across time and space which are a central focus folklore studies, as Honko's notions of 'thick corpus' and 'organic variation' exemplify (Honko, 2000). These aspects of our project are explored by Bishop (Chapter 3) and Jopson et al (Chapter 2) in this volume.

The landscape of play charted by our project displays the dialectic of sedimentation and innovation in the play spaces of childhood more broadly than in textual corpus, however. It is a landscape in which jacks, marbles and catapults have given way to the equally-rich possibilities of MP3 players, game consoles and light sabres. Meanwhile, certain structures, objects and practices remain resilient and accommodating to changing uses: hula-hoops, skipping-ropes, Tig, kiss-chase, clapping.

A longer perspective viewing the larger histories of play suggests that these shifts accompany larger social movements, in particular the changes from agrarian to industrial capitalism between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Iona Opie notes this in *The Singing Game*, arguing that 'Cecil Sharp and his followers were perhaps being optimistic if they thought to revive ... games whose *raison d'être* had largely disappeared' (1985: 25). In our research, there is a sense that the rhymes and rituals left over from a lost agrarian working-class culture no longer mean anything to the children of the twenty-first century urban class; and many of the forms documented in *The Singing Game*, such as variants of the longways sets and circles of country dance, were not to be found on our playgrounds. Rather, the significant narratives and images for them are those of contemporary media – superheroes, pop stars, the commandoes, assassins, mages and football managers of computer games – but also the fantasy figures of folklore which survive in fairy tales and children's literature (witches, zombies, princesses, ghosts, talking animals). Indeed, as Willett argues (Chapter 6), these two categories of contemporary media and folkloric residue, are often hard to distinguish from one another, and mingle freely in children's improvised scenario in what she terms 'ambiguously-referenced' play.

One way to think about this is in terms of what Raymond Williams called 'residual' culture. He distinguished this from the purely archaic:

> By 'residual' I mean something different from the archaic ... Any culture includes available elements of its past, but their place in the contemporary cultural process is profoundly variable... The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process ... (Williams, 1977: 122)

Similarly, James, Jenks and Prout give a good idea of what it might mean for the residual to be 'still active in the cultural process':

It is culture as contextualised action, not ossified cultural forms (jokes, games and childhood lore) which passes between generations of children in defiance of what children 'should' or 'ought' to know. (1998: 89)

This tension between residual culture and contextual practice has always been a visible paradox at the heart of children's play, leading the Opies, for example, to characterise children as conservative guardians of tradition on the one hand and creative folk artists on the other. Our own project has produced countless examples of this tension: children in the Opie collection who introduce television's The Saint into the well-worn clapping game 'When Susie was a Baby'; or in the playgrounds we researched, who merge the Dementors of the Harry Potter stories with Tig, and replace older media icons like Elvis Presley with current figures like Tracey Beaker.

Rehearsal, then, suggests the recounting of something old but also the invention of something new. It also necessitates repetition, as Widdowson argues in his account of the linguistic and poetic aspects of playground games (2001). This is not always a condition of playground games – some can be invented for the moment and never played again – but it is the usual condition. Like any system of communication and any system of ritual, familiarity comes from frequent repetition so that the participants can recognise and engage with the structures; though repetition always also brings change and variation: it is always reliant on difference, as Deleuze observed (1994). This idea brings together a number of themes relevant to our project. Performances based on fairly close imitation of media sources are a

staple of playground culture, as the Opies observed, and as Willett discusses in relation to performances of pop songs (Chapter 6); though she also argues that it is more common for such performances to hybridise sources and produce something new, as in the performance of 'Single Ladies' by a group of girls who borrow both from a Beyoncé original and from a version of the song in the film Alvin and the Chipmunks.

Repetition and variation is also a familiar idea in folklore studies, where the oral transmission of material is both assumed and constantly analysed. Marsh, for example, applies the theory of oral formulaic composition (Parry,1930; Lord, 1960) to children's musical games; while what Ong called the 'psycho-dynamics' of oral narrative are evident in the stories and dramatic scenarios we documented (Ong, 1982). It is also true that the easily-recognised character types and action sequences Ong finds in oral tradition can be seen in the popular fictions of contemporary media: comic-books, manga and animé, film and television drama, computer games. While these are (relatively) new forms of media, then, they share deep structures with the most archaic of narratives (Burn and Schott, 2004). It is unsurprising, then, that the superheroes, zombies, martial artists and monsters of films, games and comics should mingle so freely with folkloric figures such as witches, princesses, fairies and ghosts.

Bishop (chapter 3, this volume) analyses how one clapping song is transmitted between friends on the playground, and how this process involves the learning of and perfecting of skills, in particular physical skills of clapping and mimetic performance. However, while recognising the familiar processes of oral transmission, Bishop's study suggests a new kind of rehearsal. The girls she studies originally derived this game not from the conventional folkloric process, but from Youtube. The age of new media, in this specific context, performs a similar function to oral transmission. But it also changes the process.

Firstly, the emphasis shifts from local to global transmission (though the new game is then localised through a series of further transformations). Secondly, in principle many different versions can co-exist, and be compared and drawn on, whereas local, face-to-face transmission would typically only offer a few variations over a longer period of time. Indeed, as one recording in the Opie collection shows, the arrival of a different version of a game with a new pupil could arouse hostility and rejection (see chapter 2). Thirdly, rather counter-intuitively, online resources can provide older material as a form of popular archive. Elsewhere, we have discussed the case of a group of girls drawing for dance inspiration on Michael Jackson videos, for example (Burn, 2012).

These examples also demonstrate that the process of cultural rehearsal is not simply a question of linguistic or even musical transmission. These two communicative modes have received most attention in published collections of children's games, with the mode of language taking the lion's share. Jopson et al (Chapter 2) argue that though this is also true of the Opies' published work, the recordings reveal a broader attention to physical movement in play. The rich video data of our project makes it impossible to ignore the fact that the performative practices of the playground are made up as much of music, physical movement, gestural repertoires, and the imaginative use of found physical objects and environments as they are of language: they are, in fact, *multimodal* (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2000). Needless to say, scholars of playground culture have long been aware of this: Julia Bishop and Mavis Curtis's book includes studies of the cultural geography of the playground (Armitage, 2001); the patterns of clapping repertoires and of musical variation (Arleo, 2001); and the physical structures of hopscotch (Lichman, 2001). A methodological challenge for our project, then, has been to analyse the games we find across all the modes of signification they employ.

Finally, rehearsal involves the tension between private practice and public performance. The question of audience is oddly problematic in this landscape of play. In the case of clapping games, there appears to be no audience (and yet performance of the difficult skill of hand-clapping is constantly being judged by fellow-participants). Elsewhere, routines may oscillate between private and public. A dance routine combining cheerleading with other sources switched between an inward-facing circle of three girls and an outward-facing line – a movement between what Turino *presentational performance* and *participatory performance* (Turino:23-65). But in the age of new media, performances may be captured. The girls in Bishop's study (chapter 3) talk of putting their version on Youtube; while children we gave cameras to captured examples of their friends' games. Electronic media allows for the capture, representation and distribution of play culture globally, and the significant number of clapping games, from the US especially, to be found on Youtube is evidence enough of this.

However, the ability to rehearse material through the digital moving image can also be seen as a kind of interpretive form of display and exhibition, akin to the processes of curation in museums and galleries. As Potter argues (chapter 7), this process can be applied to the ways in which young people archive visual representations of their lives in photograph and film through social media sites, selecting, combining, interpreting and displaying narratives of self and society. In our own project, these processes became a more literal act of curation. Here, as we have described above, children from our partner schools represented categories of play through animation and voiceover commentary, developing their tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966/1983) of their own play cultures through researching families and histories. We will return to this example in the third part of this section.

The idea of cultural rehearsal, then, allows for continuity between the folkloric processes of oral transmission, sedimentation and innovation, and those enabled by digital media and participatory online practices. As Henry Jenkins argues:

> Now, the rise of participatory culture represents the reassertion of the practices and logics of folk culture in the face of a hundred years of mass culture. We now have greater capacity to create again and we are forming communities around the practices of cultural production and circulation. (Jenkins, 2010)

The combinatory ingenuity of the generations documented by the Opies is expanded by the mash-up practices of contemporary media cultures; the face-to-face repetition of rhyme, melody, choreographed movement expands into global, online repetition; the living archive of older siblings, cousins and parents is complemented by the digital archive. Folklore goes online; but by the same token, online culture acquires the improvisatory, protean character of folklore, as Walter Ong's notion of secondary orality suggested (1982).

LUDIC BRICOLAGE

Levi-Strauss's concept of bricolage is familiar in anthropology, and is an apt metaphor for the persistent collecting and re-purposing of fragments of language, music, movement, mime and artefact that has always characterised children's play. It is also familiar in media theory, and has been used from the beginning of the Cultural Studies movement to describe, again, the collection of cultural resources from a variety of sources, and the re-assignation of meanings to them, as in Hebdige's classic account of the spectacular new signifieds attached to domestic items like safety-pins in the punk aesthetic (1979).

There are innumerable examples of bricolage in the Opies' work: of children shoe-horning popstars into hymns, cartoon characters into skipping chants, TV adverts into folksongs. We found plenty more in our playgrounds: Harry Potter Tig, zombies and superheroes in family games, characters from children's books in clapping games. Many of these combinatory processes consist of what Bishop et al called *onomastic allusion*, names of favourite media characters inserted into formulaic lines of song and rhyme on a slot-and-fill basis (Bishop et al, 2006). More broadly, Willett considers in Chapter 6 how resources from media culture are integrated into children's games as 're-mixes' (Ito, 2008). In some cases these practices exemplify Bishop et al's category of *syncretism*, where larger segments of language, music or action from media sources are integrated into an established game (Bishop et al, 2006).

What we mean by *ludic bricolage* is more specific, however. It refers to the adoption and transformation of game structures: to the more rule-governed forms of play that Caillois terms *ludus*, as distinct from the looser play he calls *paidea* (Caillois, 1958/2001). In physical games these would be not only physical structures like chequerboards and goalposts, but also the rule-systems which determine them. In computer games they would be the game engine, the programmed foundation which determines what is possible in the game, and specifies the rules which govern a player's progression through the game (Aarseth, 1997). This idea adds to the familiar notion of children as players of games a conception of children as designers and mediators of games. In some respects this is not a new idea. The Opies imagined children's games as a form of creativity, while recent accounts of the cultures of play have also emphasised a creative function, suggesting that children in certain ways creatively produce their own culture. Corsaro makes this argument, emphasising however

that this creativity is not an expression of the complete cultural autonomy of childhood, but rather that the resources for such creativity are adapted from adult culture (2009: 301).

In positioning children as authors of their own games, however, we are making a more specific argument than a general claim about creativity. Analogies for the process we propose are figures such as the game designer, who plans the levels, missions, rewards and other structures of a game to achieve a satisfying experience of play; or the Dungeon-master, who keeps the rule-book in the table-top game Dungeons and Dragons, and arbitrates the play. In computer game versions of role-playing games, the role of the Dungeon-Master is effectively taken by the game-engine, which rolls the (virtual) dice, effects the rules and steers the play (Burn and Carr, 2006).

Three examples will give some idea of the variety of forms such structural borrowing and adaptation could take. The first is 'imaginary tennis' (our name), seen on the London playground. Here, the structure of tennis is borrowed, but played with an imaginary ball. At first glance this seems to be simply a form of what Bishop et al, referring to media sources, call *mimesis* (2006); and it does have mimetic qualities. However it also borrows and necessarily adapts the *rule system* of tennis. Because it cannot replicate rules fulfilled by physical phenomena (balls going out of court), it has to replace them with rules based on mutual consent that an imaginary event has in fact occurred. Where the consent breaks down, the game ceases to function. The same dilemma was seen on the Sheffield playground where a boy recounted the problem of children who refused to 'die' when 'shot' in a playground adaptation of the computer game 'Call of Duty: Modern Warfare'.

A second example is a group of 6-year-old girls playing a game using hula-hoops. The hoops were laid out on the playground, and the game involved trying not to be inside a hoop when touched by the 'on' player. This adapts the basic rules of Tig, of course. However, when interviewed, the girls excitedly said that there was a ghost on the next level, and it became clear that the rules of the game were being invented, adapted and tested as they played. As well as introducing representational material, like ghosts (and later zombies) into the game, this introduced a structure of rules, consequences and levels clearly derived from computer games, in which the girls featured not only as *players* but as *designers* of the game.

A third example is of a boy playing with a piece of wood. At one moment he uses it as a gun; at other times it transforms into a guitar. Sources for these adaptive practices are not known; but we can speculate about the possibility of games like the *Guitar Hero* and *Call of Duty* franchises (the latter very widely referenced on both playgrounds). However, while the mimetic practice is interesting in itself, the example of ludic bricolage here is the combination of these generic practices with a new set of rules. What governs when it is a gun, and when a guitar? The answer, interestingly, seems to lie at least partly outside the game. In this playground, imitation guns and references to guns are forbidden. It seems likely, then, that at least part of what determines the metamorphosis is whether adults are watching: the regulatory regime which governs all play in this space.

This is interesting because it challenges the theory of the 'magic circle' coined by Huizinga (1938/1955) and adopted by game theorists to describe the sealed nature of the game-world and its immunity from real-world consequences (eg Salen and Zimmerman, 2004). In this case, however, the very rules of this simple game derive from the real-world consequences of defying the gun ban imposed by teachers and playworkers.

Ludic bricolage, then, covers the creation of 'game engines' on the playground: adapting rule-systems from all kinds of games, from tennis to shoot-em-ups, from Tig to adventure games, from level-editing to adult regulation. It covers wide variety of adapted rule systems we saw, from the stealth structures of action adventure games, adapted to render the player supposedly invisible to opponents like (real) play-workers or (imaginary) sharks, to the rules governing character-changing in a game based on *Star Wars*, described by Richards in Chapter 4. It recognises children as players, of course; but also as mediators, referees, and designers of their own games. And finally, it recognises that the structures of computer games, while they share many features of older, even archaic, forms of play, have distinctive structures which are being imaginatively exploited and adapted in the physical play of twenty-first century childhood.

HETEROTOPIAN GAMES

The notion of the heterotopia is borrowed from Foucault's influential essay (1984). Foucault presents the heterotopia as a contrast to the utopia: where utopias are ideal unreal spaces, heterotopias are liminal spaces which mirror, contest and invert various sites in the real world.

This metaphor has been used to think about virtual worlds and game worlds. Mc Namee uses it to consider videogame worlds as spaces of escape and resistance for children (2000). Boellstorff uses it to reflect on the nature of virtuality in his ethnography of Second Life (2008). Dixon uses it to characterise children's play in virtual worlds, formulating the phrase 'heterotopic play' (2004), and presenting videogame worlds as spaces for social

interaction that escape to some degree adult regulation. While she considers the game space in relation to the physical spaces of play available to the boys she is studying, she does not consider traffic between the virtual space and the real space: rather, her point is to emphasise how heavily-regulated parks and playgrounds are by comparison with the virtual worlds of Grand Theft Auto and Pikmin. However, she does consider ways in which the imaginary worlds constructed by children in physical spaces resemble those inhabited in game-worlds (2004: 92-3).

We are indebted to these accounts, on which we can build to reflect on the forms of play we observed. The point of the heterotopia metaphor for us is more specific, and twofold. Firstly, it can be used to describe both the imaginary worlds of physical play and of computer games, as Dixon suggests; but also the shuttling of specific structures and representational devices *between* them. Where once children had only the imaginary world built in a corner of the playground, an attic or a back alley, they now have the playgrounds of shooting, adventure and strategy games. Unsurprisingly, they draw on the resources of the latter to populate the worlds of the former. Boys on both playgrounds gave examples of how they adapted scenarios and structures from the shooting game franchise Call of Duty, describing sequences of dramatic play using characters from the game, snatches of dialogue borrowed from game sequences, imaginary weapons based on those available in the game, stealth tactics (going unseen by the enemy), and systems for experiencing game-death (Burn, 2013).

These kinds of play scenario were adapted from various games, sometimes specific, sometimes generic, sometimes directly attributable to a computer game origin, sometimes intermingled with fairytale sources or other media references (see Willett, chapter 6, this volume). The point of the heterotopia metaphor is to recognise that one kind of virtual world

is being translated, effectively, into another, as Marsh argues in this volume (Chapter 4). As with all translations, something is lost – though something is also gained. What is lost is the programmed certainty of the game engine. If an enemy is shot in the game, the programmed entities of ammunition and levels of vulnerability produce a reliable, predictable outcome. In the playground, if the enemy simply refuses to dies, as one boy ruefully noted, not a lot can be done about it. Similarly, the elaborate visual detail – the representational guise of the game – has to be imagined: the desert sands, commando outfits, weapons and explosions all exist only as a shared imaginative construct in the minds of the players. However, they gain in expressive range: the physical gestures, movements, facial expressions and linguistic resources at their disposal are not limited in the way that they are by the media databases on which the game must rely. The two heterotopian spaces are differently multimodal, equipped with different semiotic resources.

Perhaps, then, we need to imagine the heterotopia as a twofold space: the connected spaces of virtual and physical play, between which the images, narratives and ludic structures of games can flow. An immediate objection might be anticipated: the flow can only go one way; and this is certainly true of Call of Duty and any game in which the player can make no creative intervention to change the game permanently (though the same would not be true of other games where the player's role can be to build, such as The Sims, whose family-building process strongly resembles the sociodramatic family games of the playground).

However, in what appears to be a very different approach, part of our project involved the design of a prototype computer game for physical or kinesic interfaces like the Nintendo Wii and Microsoft Kinect (described in the previous section). The idea of this was to allow

children to 'record' their game by playing it in front of the computer's mix of camera and motion detector, so that they could then play it back and play against it.

This strand of the project, which explored the relation between embodied play and the virtual embodiment made possible by advances such as the Wii and Microsoft's Kinect, is described by Mitchell in Chapter 8. One set of user-tests, conducted in London, showed a range of comments by the students experimenting with an early version of the prototype. One type of comment relates to the scoring system introduced by the prototype: the game involves trying to clap the player's hand (holding a Wii-mote) against a virtual hand on the screen, with a point scored for each hit. One child's comments related this to the scoring systems used in commercial Wii games; while the attempts of several children to achieve high scores suggested a particular pleasure of this ludic function. One girl, Alex, found satisfaction in two quite different ways: she discovered that minimal movements gained more hits and thus higher scores (just as minimal movements in Wii sports games are more effective than fully mimetic moves); while at other times, she used the Wii-motes to execute dance-like movements with her hands which gained no reward within the game but produced its own aesthetic pleasure. The evidence here seemed to suggest, then, that transplanting a traditional playground game such as a clapping game to a computer game environment, and hybridising it with other ludic functions such as scoring, produced certain kinds of pleasurable play and a different set of cultural associations; while adaptive, improvisatory, open play also seemed a possible way forward.

In a later session of user-testing and participatory design in Sheffield, this time based on a more advanced prototype using a mix of Wii and Kinect technologies, children were asked to provide comments on post-it notes for the improvement of the game. Ideas produced

here reflected to some degree the children's gaming experiences, but also their awareness of the possibilities of this kind of kinesic environment. They suggested particular activities, including sport, wrestling (field notes observe a media-inspired interest in wrestling at the Sheffield school), fighting games and karate; and the inclusion of different characters, such as pets and 'creatures'.

This experiment, then, forms another example of the heterotopian game: where the physical play in one world produces a virtual equivalent on the other side of the screen. And because it can be recorded, exported, replayed elsewhere by different children, the virtual version enjoys the generic benefits of new media: portability, global reach, digital iteration; in fact, the features of 'cultural rehearsal' described above.

As well as providing a metaphor for imaginary worlds, Foucault's heterotopia includes a set of specific applications to the dramatic content of playground games. He gives examples of the liminal spaces in real societies that exemplify the heterotopia, including cemeteries, brothels, ships, prisons and barracks. These seem to be particularly adult places, remote from the preoccupations of childhood: until we realise that, as Corsaro argues (2009), the resources for children's culture are poached from adult culture; that children's play imagines adult dangers and explores them in imaginary form; and that liminality and transgression are as important in children's culture as they are in adult culture. In these respects, then, all of Foucault's examples have a place. Children on the London playground made ships (and planes, and assault courses) out of loose wooden structures available to them. Adaptations of Tig used imaginary prisons to confine those who were touched by the one who was on. Boys playing Call of Duty-style commando games echo the barracks, and the forms of agonistic play described by Richards in Chapter 4 experiment with combat-

styled play likely to attract the censure of watching adults. Brothels seem both less likely and inappropriate – and indeed, we found no explicit references to sexual play in either of our playgrounds. However, as Jopson et al describe (Chapter 2), the Opies found more explicit depictions of adult sexuality in spaces less constrained by adult regulation.

Finally, Foucault has one other kind of heterotopia of relevance to our project, which he calls 'heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time, for example museums and libraries'. He is characteristically bleak about 'the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place'. We may borrow the metaphor, perhaps, in a more optimistic spirit, though it is worth noting the dangers of taking a culture whose vitality depends on restless transformation and freezing it in a library display. However, there are qualities of the British Library website of our project which attempt to contest this freezing, or in Foucault's term, immobility. This element of our project which involved panels of children as co-curators of their own games on the website can be seen as another example of heterotopian games. The physical games are captured, delimited in the frames of the sample video-sequences on the site; they are interrogated in the voiceover commentaries of the children and the drawings of the animated films they made about their own play; and the accumulation of time Foucault comments on so drily is indeed performed in the inclusion of archive examples (audio, photographic, filmic) of games across the last century (see Potter, Chapter 8).

Two points can be made about this kind of heterotopia. Firstly, it represents a coming to terms with time and history on the part of the children. The typical condition of their play with sedimented cultural resources is an unawareness of history, often accompanied by a claim to have made the game up, as researchers from the Opies onwards have noted (Bishop,

Chapter 3). Games may be seen as a dimension of the child's habitus, the combination of physical play and cultural dispositions; and we have already noted above Bourdieu's notion of habitus as embodied but forgotten history (1990). In the act of curating the website, the children researched their own play and that of their parents; and this interpretative work involves a remembering of these forgotten histories. If the heterotopian space accumulates and freezes time, then, it also inverts the child's customary amnesia, provoking a remembering of history.

Secondly, this curatorial work is allied to the kind of informal practices of curation characteristic of participatory online cultures: children's photos on Flickr, their own sites on Facebook or Bebo, their avatars in Habbo Hotel or Club Penguin (see Marsh, Chapter 4; and Marsh, 2010); their videos on Youtube; and here, on the British Library site, their animations, characterised by the parodic humour of child art. Potter suggests the metaphor of curation for these new assemblages of selfhood, describing the digital videos of the primary school children in his research as:

> ... a new kind of literacy practice which can be metaphorically characterised as curating. The resources from which they made meaning were collected, catalogued and arranged for exhibition. These included practices which were previously unseen, acts of memory and habitualised behaviour which were not previously recorded in this way, but which were part of their everyday, lived experience. (Potter, 2009)

In this respect, the framing of games in moving image archives surrounded by spoken and written commentary is a process central both to the informal curatorship of the Youtube videos Bishop discusses in Chapter 3 as well as the more formal curatorship of the British

Library website. Both arrest the flow of time, accumulate histories, and construct archives, as Foucault says; but both also display dynamic movement, and invite further contributions in a dialogic offer, an affordance which Foucault could not have considered.

A final point to make about heterotopian games is again suggested by Foucault's essay. He counterposes heterotopias against utopias, transgressive reality contrasted with ideal unreality. In our study, the imaginary worlds of children's play were superimposed on the physical playground itself. In many cases, this involved an imaginary transformation of objects: tree-stumps became consoles, tarmac patches became poison pits, toilet doors became magic portals. In any case, the imaginary landscape was laid like a palimpsest over the physical terrain. This constant layering of imaginary over real raises questions about the ontologies of play and its geographies. The playgrounds are designed with the best of intentions to promote imaginative play, and can be seen as utopian spaces: adult aspirations for children's play. Despite their material nature, these aspirations represent an unreal space of play; the real game-worlds are those constructed in the shared imaginings of the children, designed, developed, tested, revised, inhabited and abandoned through the imaginative transformation of physical and ideational resources, including language, music, movement and the manipulation of objects and the built and natural environment. The utopian space is both ignored and exploited by heterotopian games; it provides raw materials, but its hopeful projection of peaceful play and rural idyll may well be rudely overwritten with the explosions of commando attack, the menacing sharks of shipwreck scenarios, and the out-of-control monsters of demonically-possessed families. A cautionary note, however, is introduced by Richards in Chapter 4, who argues that the modality of such imaginary scenarios is variable,

modality here referring to the degree of certainty in the credibility of the game[3]. The relative 'reality' status, then, of the adult-designed utopian playground and the child-authored heterotopian game will fluctutate, each moving in and out of focus, flickering into being and fading from view with changing circumstances and motivations.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS THE LUDIC CENTURY

When the Opies looked back at the work of earlier collectors of children's folklore, they found startling similarities with the cultures they charted as well as striking differences. They noted that of the chants recorded by Norman Douglas in 1916, more than 78% were still sung by the children they studied in 1959 (1959: vi). At the same time, they note changes in the sources and mechanisms of transmission which seem to be new, and which anticipate the media cultures of the present day. The best example, perhaps, is their account of the ballad of Davy Crockett, launched on the radio in 1956, and subjected to a near-identical parody within months in sites as far apart as London and Sydney (1959: 7).

We have had a similar experience. When we set our data against the recordings in the Opie Collection, we have noted extensive similarities, especially in the genre of clapping games; but also in the ways in which children cannibalize, rework, revoice, rehearse material from media sources. At the same time, we observe the differences: the diminishing echoes of longlost cultures; the changing fashions, crazes and preoccupations; the material and economic changes in the mediascapes and commercial toys from the 1970s to the present day.

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[3] Modality is the term derived from linguistics and employed in Social Semiotics to denote the truth claim made by a text; in effect, its credibility (eg Hodge and Kress, 1988).

As our categories of cultural rehearsal, ludic bricolage and heterotopian games suggest, then, the age of new media does bring new affordances and new cultural emphases. The forms of near-instantaneous distribution and participatory creation and critique typical in online culture have extended the 'transworld couriers' employed by the 'schoolchild underground' noted by the Opies (1959:7). Meanwhile, the ubiquitous culture of the computer game, with its procedural versions of imaginary worlds and its programmed rule-systems, feeds back productively into the playground. Unlike all other media (which may provide content, imagery, character sets and narratives), games provide ludic system for exploitation in the playground. Henry Jenkins has observed that play is a component of the kind of literacy needed for the new media age (2007); while game designer Eric Zimmerman has gone so far as to claim that the twenty-first century is the Ludic Century, characterised by playful attitudes to the conventional authorities of language, politics and education (2007). We would sound a cautionary note: older media forms such as television and film are still dominant in children's cultures; and as we have argued, there as many continuities with older, even archaic, forms of play as there are innovative departures. Yet it may be true that this is a century less inclined to infantilise play; to recognise that it is not only a preparation for adulthood but a continuing condition of adult culture; and to see that it has lessons for educators which this book has no space to address[4]. In the games, choreographies, music and drama of the playground, the foundations of the arts and humanities curriculum are laid, and their complexity challenges our inadequate educational templates to thicken up with the cultures of play.

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[4] Though a follow-up project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and led by Rebekah Willett, has considered this. Entitled 'Talkin' 'Bout My Generation', the project developed a resource pack of teaching materials for primary schools in collaboration with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education in London. The pack is available as a downloadable pdf from the Playtimes website: www.bl.uk/playtimes.

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