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Inner child, can we play?

An ethnographic narrative enquiry of personal play histories

Masters in Drama Therapy

Yael Sara Kersh

Supervised by Warren Nebe

14 November 2017

Plagiarism Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this research report is my own original work and that it has not previously, whether in its entirety or in part, been submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand or any other university for the purpose of a degree. I am aware that plagiarism is wrong and I confirm that the required referencing conventions have been applied.

_____ _____

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Abstract

The research consists of a practical arts-based research component and a research report that surveys the practice. This document serves as the written element of the research and investigates the key theoretical standpoints, methodologies applied and creative outcomes.

The research aimed to explore the dynamics of adults and play within Drama Therapy by investigating the relationship between six adult women and their personal play histories. It questioned what play meant to the individual and invited her to share her most memorable playful moments through various forms of expression in a number of individual interview-discussions.

Through a practical arts-based research approach, an ethnographic narrative inquiry unfolded about women, play, childhood memory and present adulthood. The research took these shared narratives and presented them back to the six participants through various playful methods. With the use of methodologies such as inter-subjectivity, playful listening, narrative enquiry and Playback Theatre, the research offered a series of representational reflections of the shared stories. The creative outcomes were presented in a storybook representation which used imagery and poetic rhyme to document each narrative, a stop-motion film that used moving image and voice, and an presentation-installation that invited each woman to engage with her playful inner-self reflected back to her. The report is written with these playful elements which attempt to mirror the creative representational outcomes, inviting the reader to access his or her playful self.

Thematically, three key factors presented themselves throughout the five-stage research process. These include the emotional experience associated with play, the notion of an inner-child or childhood and play within context. All three elements are discussed in the research report, with the use of the contextual factor symbolised by road signs to represent the intersectionality of play and its relationship to the individual.

The research presents a number of key contributing factors to the discussion of adults and play in Drama Therapy. It attempts to explore alternative ways of delving into therapeutic process while respecting individual perspectives and personal narratives. It highlights the fundamental value of play within a drama therapeutic paradigm and how the notion of play and play memories contribute to the adult self. It also affirms the role of arts-based practice as a powerful tool for validation and witnessing of clients.

Key Words

Play, Drama Therapy, Adult Woman, Inner-Child, Personal Play History, Arts-Based Research

Dedication

For She who lived each day with Play

Mommy

Acknowledgements

To my darling husband and best friend, I thank you for holding me, guiding me, understanding me, and most importantly playing with me. I love you.

To Daddy and Floss, I thank you for supporting me through it all. Your constant love and care grounded my potential and led me to become the woman I am today.

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Welcome



An Introduction

As a child, I could sit in front of the mirror for hours pretending to be anything or anyone, chatting to myself and imaginary others. I could stand there discussing all sorts of weird and wonderful things, immersed in the magic of a single moment. I could talk and talk, dance and sing, as if time was still. Engulfed in the stories of my spontaneous play, I could exist in this magical world until the end of day. I remember playing with my dolls, for hours at a time. I remember emptying the linen cupboard and using my findings to build tents. The upside down chairs and objects became the structures of the worlds created. I remember wearing my mother's clothes, becoming my future self.

I remember playing as a child and when I remember, I seem to smile.

Here I am attempting to write a paper and the blank page before me seems to be a trigger of future endeavours. My mind tends to fly away to all sorts of other wonderful places, as I make funny noises and talk to myself aloud, playing with the accents my voice can create. When, for a moment, silence settles in, I notice that instead of typed vocabulary, scrap paper is full of doodling. It is easy to make a fool of myself as I thrive on the ability to lighten the seriousness of adulthood. I never pass up the opportunity to dress up or dance; I never pass up the opportunity to create. Whether it is classified as day-dreaming, comedy, art or perhaps even play, my adult-self depends on these moments.

Evidently, I am drawn to the notion of play and my relationship to memories of childhood play. I am fascinated by what Stuart Brown (2009) terms play histories, our personal play stories that carry moments of our past, our individual relationships to play and playfulness. I am drawn to this because I consider myself an adult player and often let my playful, childlike-self engage in adult matters. I am drawn to this because I am a Drama Therapist in training and trust in play as a therapeutic language. Brown, the founder of the National Institute for Play, agrees with Donald Winnicott and Peter Gray, that play has a strong correlation with health and that for one to be a healthy adult, one must engage in forms of play (Brown, 2008, Gray, 2011, Winnicott, 1971,). My relationship with play is grounded in this idea, as I rely on play to assist me in facing the rigidity of adulthood. I use my playful-self to cope, laugh and somewhat escape, accessing my joyous, silly, spontaneous inner-child, and in so doing, I keep myself healthy.

With this in mind, I became curious as to how other adult women relate to their childlike-selves and whether they access their personal play histories.

I therefore introduced the theme of play in Drama Therapy to various adults, but noticed that their immediate response was regarding its ideal use as an intervention for children. Although I agree with the use of play in Drama Therapy for children, as children are often eager to play, I am curious as to why adults are tentative regarding play. From my own experience, I assume that it relates to external factors such as the adult need to be taken seriously, learned or forced age-appropriate behaviours, emotional stigmatisation, stress and/or a fear of silliness. Generally speaking, Western society encourages adults to be conscious of their every move, to take control of and responsibility for their actions and in essence, to separate work from play (Tonkin and Whitaker, 2016). The Google work environment defies this separation and validates the importance of an imaginative space that triggers creativity. In an article published in The New York Times, James Stewart explores *Google Perks* and describes the playful work environment Google provides (Stewart, 2013).

Likewise, in her book entitled *Jung on Active Imagination*, movement therapist and Jungian analyst Joan Chodorow cites Jung (1921):

> 'Every good idea and all creative work are the offspring of the imagination, and have their source in what one is pleased to call infantile fantasy. Not the artist alone, but every creative individual whatsoever owes all that is greatest in his life to fantasy. The dynamic principle of fantasy is play, a characteristic also of a child, and as such it appears inconsistent with the principle of serious work. But without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable' (Jung cited in Chodorow, 1997: 5)

Almost a century prior to Google's establishment, Carl Jung emphasised the importance of fantasy in enabling creativity. He attributed this creativity to childhood play, which in the case of Google, may be one of the key factors contributing to their success. In addition to my personal relationship with play, my interest in the correlation between play and health stems from my scope of practice. As a Drama Therapist in training, I believe in the power and health benefits of play, in one's relationship with one's personal play and in the diversity play allows for the generational self. I believe that this correlation is quite profound and it is this that shapes the landscape for this research process.

Aim

The aim of the research was to explore the relationship that adult women have with their personal play memories and to note if or how this sense of play manifests in their adult lives, using arts-based enquiry to represent the outcomes.

I began with the following research question:

Why does play integrate with some adults and get lost with others?

Although at first this question appeared central to the research process, within moments of engagement it seemed flawed. The question implied that some adults do not play as it assumed a definition of play. I soon realised that play was unique to the individual and that play could not simply be termed play – it had to first be defined and grounded within the individual's context.

I therefore reassessed the research question and proposed the following,

What does play mean to the individual?

In his book entitled *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul*, Stuart Brown (2009) invites his reader to explore an early memory that captures play, a moment of excitement or exploration that takes him or her back to the most clear, joyful and playful image. Through a ninety minute exercise, Brown invites his client to connect memories of play to current adult life and to find links or lack thereof to career choice, family life and emotional wellbeing (Brown, 2009).

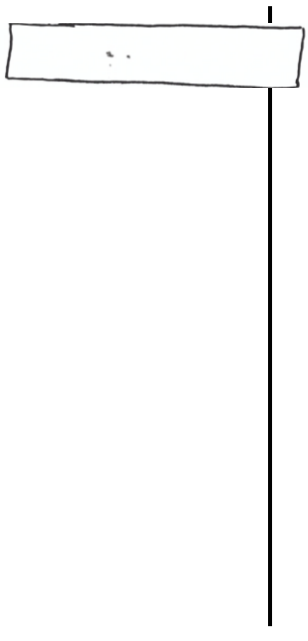
Understandably, this research did not use Brown's entire in-depth process, forming connections between play histories and career choice, family life and emotional wellbeing. It focused on the foundational question that initiates the conversation. It asked for the participants to explore back to a clear, joyful, playful time, whether through a toy, game or moment, in an attempt to remember play and access their personal play histories (Brown, 2009).

By inviting each participant to define play and share a dear moment of her playful self, a personal connection could be made. It was this connection that held significance for the research. The research aimed to explore the relationship the participant had with her personal play history and through projective techniques, reflect these narratives back to the individual.

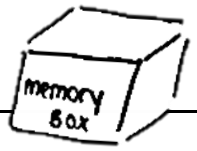
Where to Start

The research followed a creative methodology which used ethnographic narrative enquiry to capture personal play memories through playful representation. Additionally, play, personal play history, memory and storytelling were drawn on to explore whether this process would have therapeutic value. At the start, the creative aspect of the research process was undefined, as the process needed to guide the outcome. Thus, as the research evolved, the data and interactions directed the creative process and ultimately the final presentation-installation. The methods thus became the container for the research and the narrations its guide. The methodology was led by carefully formulated and executed arts-based reflections that attempted to represent what had been shared, providing an in-depth metaphoric validation that distanced the participants from a vulnerable position while honouring and referencing their stories. One such metaphor was that of the street sign.

A street sign is a symbol which can indicate direction, often leading to other roads which connect or run parallel to each other. It provides context, structure and position which allows for decisions to be made and varied routes to be taken. Street signs hold names of spaces where personal or collective moments occur, memories are created and play takes place. It was a symbol that held significance within the narrative of each of the six participants, as it represented the context of the stories shared. Therefore, the street sign was used as a metaphor to represent the participant throughout the creative process. For the purpose of the written element, the street sign will hold additional symbolic significance. It will act as a metaphor for the structure of this research paper, suggesting that there is no set route to the reading process, but that it can be approached from any avenue. This symbolises the maze-like construct of play and playfulness, its ambiguity and complexity, as well as its fluidity and interconnectedness. Each street sign represents a component of the paper that in essence connects to any other, providing a mapped web of cyclical connections, while simultaneously inviting the reader to move up or down, left or right in order to connect her past, present and future play.



Process



Personal Play History

Using a convenience sampling approach, six women between the ages of 30 and 60 years were invited to participate in the research process. The participants originated from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds and were based in Johannesburg at the time of the study.

An initial individual interview was conducted with each participant[1] in a location most suitable to her. The participant was asked to narrate and contextualise her personal play history by firstly defining play according to her own understanding and classification of the term, secondly narrating a memory or memories of play and thirdly, relating that play to her adult-self. These three guiding points of conversation were pivotal to the process, as the conversation, although open-ended, had an overall aim – to collect six personal play histories. The third component was reliant on the first two steps – only once the participant had defined and contextualised her understanding of play and shared her moments and memories, could she then connect that personal play to her adult self. The interview process took on a semi-formal structure in an attempt to bridge the formalities that could be associated with academic research and the personal dimension the process envisioned. The interviews began as verbal conversations or narrations and with several of the participants manifested into other forms of telling and sharing. With some, the response was heightened through song and with others expressed through illustration and colour – the invitation was open but undoubtedly the use of metaphor allowed for a deeper recall.

Listening Player Artist Researcher Therapist

Immediately after listening and interacting with each participant, I reflected on the discussion and stories shared. I reflected as a player, artist, researcher and therapist – each role and its subsequent reflection presented a level of listening, an additional understanding that in its own right deepened the work. This stage can be categorised as the capturing of data, as I used creative embodiment, creative writing and drawing to reflect on the contents and narratives. I wrote poetry for each story or moment as a form of capturing the essence of what had been communicated and whilst listening and re-listening to the recorded interviews, I drew imagery in response to the narratives, memories, verbal and non-verbal emotions. I considered the embodied language I had

[1] Extracts from these initial interviews are incorporated throughout the paper and are accessible in Appendix C

witnessed together with the actual dialogue and threaded these aspects together. Additionally, I noticed both similarities and differences between various narratives and created a landscape of these parallels.

Reflection at Play

After an intensive four-week process of interviewing and capturing data through creative means, I formulated and compiled a childlike inspired storybook of illustrated poetry. I organised follow-up interactions with each participant individually and presented my creative response back to her for feedback and correction[2]. The intention of these follow-up interactions was to capture the essence of the participants' stories, the emotional quality, the imagery and reminiscence of each memory. Based on their reactions, comments and additional recall, I edited and re-wrote the poetry, formulating a product representational storybook that held the stories of six child-selves, six adult-selves and the voice of Play[3]. I then played with the drawn imagery and brought the storybook to life by creating a stop-motion film with a narrative voice over. This was an additional listening device that was used to capture the profound moments shared. The images came to life and played with and within the narrated poetry.

Real Play

These two representations, namely the storybook and stop-motion film, were then presented to the participants through a play space installation, where they were invited to come and literally engage in a life-sized representation of their personal play. The participants were invited to bring a guest to share in their experience.

The presentation-installation began with the voice of Play[4] welcoming the participant-audience into the play space and motivating them to interact with the large imagery, games and colours. After a number of invitations and interactions, the voice of Play asked for the audience to find a seat and the stop-motion storybook came to life. The voice of Play narrated the story and for each character, highlighted something unique about that individual. After the viewing, I, as facilitator-researcher, stepped into the play space and held a brief discussion with the extended

[2] Extracts from the follow-up discussions are incorporated throughout the paper and are accessible in Appendix D
[3] Extracts from the storybook are present throughout the paper and are accessible in Appendix F
[4] The lines spoken by the voice of Play can be accessed in Appendix G

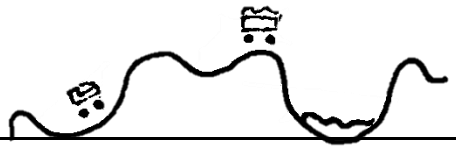
participant-audience group, which was followed by a focused discussion-reflection with the research participants who were present[5].

Collective Replay

Although the installation was created and designed to honour and hold the memories of the six research participants, it in no way disclosed their identities. Each street sign, life-sized image and object related to at least one of the stories shared, representing personal narratives only recognisable to the participants themselves. At the same time the installation functioned as a standalone experience, as many of the guests (individuals who experienced the space as additional participants) noted how the installation triggered their personal memories of play. They suggested that although the signs may not have indicated the exact location where their memories were held, the street signs triggered childhood memories, reminding them of the streets where they lived and/or next door neighbours with whom they played. The imagery, voice, colour and objects elicited and held personal play histories not only for the six participants, but for a collective other.

[5] Photographs from the installation can be accessed in Appendix H

Play



The research attempted to highlight the significance of play and the types of play that serve towards a child's development through to adulthood. It focussed on the adult woman and aimed to question why and how play had contributed to her adult-self. The roles of play in childhood and childhood development towards adulthood have become significant areas of study. They are subjects of research that are described and discussed by various play theorists in psychology, as well as other humanitarian fields. This section provides an introduction to play studies and its literature, presenting findings from some of the key contributors.

What is Play?

At first glance, this is a question which may seem somewhat simple, but it is in fact very complex. In an attempt to address this question, I will make reference to a number of fundamental play theorists. These theorists are not necessarily the major players in the theoretical game, but are key contributors to this specific research process.

In his book entitled *The Ambiguity of Play*, Brian Sutton-Smith begins by stating that:

> 'We all play occasionally, and we all know what playing feels like. But when it comes to making theoretical statements about what play is, we fall into silliness. There is little agreement among us, and much ambiguity'(Sutton-Smith, 1997: 1)

Play is a universal term that is referred to and experienced by almost every being. It exists within the vast humanitarian sciences from anthropological research of human behaviour to psychological understandings of human development. Many studies focus on play, including animal experiments and observations, and research regarding why and how the brain plays. It is a term that is used in the arts, from dramatic play to musical composition, in education, recreational activities, sports science and as will later be discussed, it is a term used in therapy. Play is universal and common in practice, yet as Sutton-Smith (1997) states, is ambiguously defined.

Within this context, let us begin with Dutch historian Johan Huizinga who attempts to define play in the opening chapter of his work entitled *Homo Luden: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1949). According to Huizinga:

> ' [Play is] a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the play intensely and utterly. It is

> an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their differences from the common world by disguise or other means' (Huizinga, 1949: 13)

Although it can be argued whether play consists of 'fixed rules' that present themselves in an 'orderly manner' (Huizinga, 1949: 13), for Huizinga these aspects are valid. His view of play is grounded in a cultural perspective and through careful analysis and an in-depth discussion, he identifies the key contributors to the process of play.

Firstly, Huizinga states that play is innately free. He says:

> 'Child and animal play because they enjoy playing, and therein precisely lies their freedom' (Huizinga, 1949: 8)

Secondly, he notes that although play may be taken seriously, it is in essence 'not serious' (Huizinga, 1949: 13). Huizinga discusses the complexity of play's relationship to seriousness and states:

> 'The relationship between play and seriousness is always fluid. The inferiority of play is continuously being offset by the corresponding superiority of its seriousness' (Huizinga, 1949: 8).

If play is to be considered 'free' and primarily 'not seriously serious' (Huizinga, 1949: 13) then the third point Huizinga makes, is that play is and should be experienced for play's sake, with no ulterior motive (Huizinga, 1949). Although this aspect will be revisited with developmental play theories, the idea is that play may be beneficial to the individual, but should not be performed purely for its benefits. Huizinga furthers this idea by introducing the element of 'fun'.

> 'The fun of playing, resists all analysis, all logical interpretation' (Huizinga, 1949: 3).

Huizinga therefore poses a question – if play has the element of 'freedom' and in essence is 'not serious' (Huizinga, 1949: 13), can 'play' still be considered play if it is missing the property of fun?

Lastly, Huizinga discusses how play magically connects the players. The participants at play are a part of a process that has distanced them from reality and all the players have played a part in this sharing. Perhaps through the play, a sense of 'secrecy' has been formed, rules negotiated, situations experienced and moments shared (Huizinga, 1949).

Although this is only a small part of Huizinga's complete discussion, it is an introduction to the fundamental aspects of play theory. It lends itself to the theoretical grounding of play and for the purpose of this paper, acts as a springboard for other theoretical standpoints.

Stuart Brown (2009) responds to the ambiguity presented by Sutton-Smith (1997) by stating how difficult it is to define play. It depends on experience and not description, belonging to the player in that moment and not to the theoretical standpoint of selected features. He humours that 'defining play [is] like explaining a joke – analysing it takes the joy out of it' (Brown, 2009: 16). Yet, despite his call to keep play undefined, his scientific training encourages him to list what he refers to as the properties of play (Brown, 2009).

The first property Brown describes is that play is apparently purposeless; it is an activity done for its own sake and not for any survival value such as money or food (Brown, 2009: 17). Secondly, he notes that play is voluntary. Play is experienced for the sake of play and should not be forced or become a required duty (Brown, 2009). Thirdly, play has an inherent attraction in that 'it's fun, it makes you feel good. It provides psychological arousal (that's how behavioural scientists say that something is exciting) [and] is a cure for boredom' (Brown, 2009: 17). His forth statement is that play allows for freedom from time, as our sense of time becomes irrelevant when we are fully at play. The fifth property refers to an experience of diminished consciousness of self – our self-guard and self-doubt becomes lessened as 'we are fully in the moment, in the zone' (Brown, 2009: 17). We are totally engulfed in the play and therefore, external or environmental factors that would generally influence our behaviour become extraneous. Brown's sixth property of play is that it has improvisational potential. Play is malleable, it has the potential to change and develop within the moment and also has the potential to change or affect us beyond the play. 'The act of play itself may be outside "normal" activities' (Brown, 2009: 18) but may influence or shape our "normal" behaviours and realisations. 'You never really know what's going to happen when you play'(Brown, 2009: 18). Lastly, play provides a continuation desire. 'We desire to keep doing it, and the pleasure of the experience drives that desire. We find ways to keep it going. If something threatens to stop the fun, we improvise new rules or conditions so that the play doesn't have to end. And when it is over, we want to do it again' (Brown, 2009: 18).

Using a substantial number of Huizinga's (1949) play pointers, Brown defines the properties of play. Yet, Brown's (2009) description is not a final and conclusive definition of play and in its own right serves the ambiguous nature of the term.

The beauty of play theory is that within every definition there is experience, a personal understanding and history of play. In an article entitled *Vygotskian and Post-Vygotskian Views of Children's Play*, Elena Bodrova and Deborah Leong (2015) discuss how developmental psychoanalyst Lev Vygotsky defines the notion of play. They suggest that Vygotsky's classification refers to a specific type of play, namely make-believe play, excluding a variety of other forms of play that children may engage in (Bodrova and Leong, 2015). They describe three distinct factors that make up Vygotsky's definition of pretend or make-believe play: an imaginary situation, the child taking on and acting out roles and a set of rules defined by those roles (Bodrova and Leong, 2015). Vygotsky suggests that this form of play is transitional, providing the child with moments of exploration to discover and learn, to engage in spontaneity and symbolic play and to develop with the roles and rules as the play evolves, in essence fostering the imagination (Bodrova and Leong, 2015).

> 'Imagination is a new formation that is not present in the consciousness of the very young child, is totally absent in animals, and represents a specifically human form of conscious activity. Like all functions of consciousness, it originally arises from action. The old adage that children's play is imagination in action can be reversed: we can say that imagination in adolescents and schoolchildren is play without action' (Vygotsky cited in Bodrova and Leong, 2015: 375)

According to Vygotsky cited in Bodrova and Leong (2015), play, particularly pretend play, is pivotal to a child's development. Through action and exploration, new discoveries are made which foster imagination and acts as the foundation for creativity in later life.

Although this is not Vygotsky's entire theoretical standpoint, it is part of how Vygotsky defines play. It is a recognised perspective, one that contributes substantially to the understanding of play, specifically within the psychotherapeutic realm.

Another contributor to this discussion is Peter Slade (1970), one of the earliest advocates of play (particularly dramatic play) within education. According to Slade:

> 'There are two main forms of play – personal play and projected play. Both the type of person and the life occupation are connected with the balance of self and

> projection. These two early types of play have an important bearing on the building of Man, his whole behaviour, and his ability to fit in with society. Play opportunity therefore means gain and development. Lack of play may mean a permanent lost part of oneself. It is this unknown, uncreated part of oneself, this missing link, which may be a cause of difficulty and uncertainty in later years' (Slade, 1970: 5)

Slade (1970) comes from an educational and dramatic background. His view in conjunction with Huizinga (1949) links play to the notion of culture and self within society, however it also connects to what Vygotsky notes as developmental creativity (Bodrova and Leong, 2015). Here, Slade visits the association between play and reality. He ties two definitions of play, personal and projective, to the individual and his or her occupation within society and further suggests that a loss of play may result in a lost part of one's self (Slade, 1970). Slade, much like Vygotsky, believes in the centrality of childhood play. In his book entitled *An Introduction to Child Drama*, Slade writes:

> 'Play is an inborn and vital part of young life. It is not an activity of idleness, but is rather the child's way of thinking, proving, relaxing, working, remembering, daring, testing, creating and absorbing. It is, in fact, life' (Slade, 1970: 1)

Although profound in his statement, Slade (1970) does not mention Huizinga's notion of 'fun' (Huizinga, 1949: 3). Slade lists a wide range of experiences, mostly developmental, for the child at play. He comments on the contribution of play to later life, but more as a result of childhood play than as an actual adult experience (Slade, 1970). Yet, this is Slade's understanding and definition of play, likely based on life experiences.

If the objective of this chapter was to answer what play is and formulate a discussion of play and its layered meaning, we could conclude. However, although the question of defining play was central to the introduction and is core to this research, it is imperative to acknowledge the framework in which this research is placed. It is essential to go one step further and focus on the definition and use of play within a therapeutic framework, particularity within that of Drama Therapy.

> 'Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a

state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play' (Winnicott, 1971: 38).

In the above quote, psychoanalyst Donald Wood Winnicott is at play. His statement, although seemingly straightforward, pin points (at least for me) a complex matter. Winnicott (1971) suggests that in a psychotherapeutic setting there are two people at play, the patient and the therapist. These two participants form a relationship by playing together. If, however, the patient cannot play or seems to be unable to access play, the therapeutic aim is for the therapist to assist the patient in moving from a state of being unable to play into a state of being able to play.

Winnicott's (1971) view of play in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis is primarily reliant on verbal expression. 'It manifests itself for instance, in the choice of words, in the inflections of the voice, and indeed in the sense of humour' (Winnicott, 1971: 40). Winnicott's use of the term play carries connotations of healthy expression – his perception is that patients who present themselves through verbal playfulness are able to engage in a therapeutic relationship. However, I question how else play could be defined. While I do value and adhere to Winnicott's (1971) definition, as an arts practitioner I question how others define play, how the client, patient or Winnicott's play mate relates to this notion of play or playfulness. Furthermore, play, if only defined by the therapist, can be misinterpreted, as what may seem to be unexpected behaviour for the therapist could actually be play for the patient. Language consists of various properties and a sense of humour is profoundly unique. Surely in some instances play could therefore be misunderstood or simply unrecognisable.

For Drama Therapist Phil Jones:

> 'Drama and play are part of a developmental continuum. As a part of this continuum play is included in the expressive language which the client uses to create meaning and explore material in Dramatherapy' (Jones, 1996b: 194).

Jones (1996b) refers to play quite similarly to Winnicott (1971). Jones agrees that play is a language that is used for therapeutic communication and that the therapist is a key player in the therapeutic relationship. He notes that in Drama Therapy play is core to the therapeutic process, not only with regard to 'playful' verbal expression, but through actual playing – physically, imaginatively and spontaneously (Jones, 1996b).

Play is language, play is process and play is moments. For some it has a clear structure and for others it cannot be defined. Play is sometimes full of purpose and sometimes purposeless.

> ‘Play is always a matter of context. It is not what we do, but how we do it. Play cannot be defined, because in play all definitions slither, dance, combine, break apart, and recombine’ (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 43).

The discussion could be endless because play is unique to the player.

This section has presented the viewpoints of key contributors to the discussion of play. Through various perspectives and pools of thought, the vital role of play on cognitive and emotional development, as well as personal wellness, has been demonstrated. Thematically, a recurring concept in the proposed definitions is that of play being a free activity that is experienced for its own sake. While often contributing to development, the theories all emphasise how play should be played for the purpose of playing.

However, the research question encompasses the individual’s personal experience of play. Thus, together with play for plays sake and the definitions proposed by Huizinga, Brown, Vygotsky, Winnicott, Slade and Jones, play also needs to be defined by the participant, as play is contained in the participant’s personal experience.

What is Play for the Adult Woman?

This section will present the six participants’ definitions of play and link shared themes and the theoretical definitions discussed in the previous section. The themes will be drawn from both the literature and the participants’ definitions in order to ground and define play for the purpose of this research.

> ‘It’s a space of… exchange… and… it’s a space of exchange where one meditates on a level understood by kids. Because we think we are better than play right? Like adults when they look at play they like ah the kids must go and play… but… it’s… you meditate. You meditate in play’ (Participant A, Appendix A)

> ‘It’s being able to do whatever you want to do, in the most sincere ways enjoyable. So it’s basically just actively being free and enjoying yourself. So, play would be in a physical way for me mostly… or imaginary. Like when I’m being creative with my child, and telling him stories that I just made up, that’s a form of play for me’ (Participant B, Appendix A)

'If you say play, the first thing that comes to my head is acting. It's what I think of. I hear play, I see acting. I narrate; maybe it's from where I'm from, we make sounds to narrate things. So it's like, I can say something to one of my sisters without even saying it in English, without even saying it with words, but I can make a sound, she knows what I'm saying. I can do this and she knows what I'm saying, so it's like, it's an integral part of, also Nigerians we're used to acting things, performing things, basically. So that's play for me' (Participant C, Appendix A).

'Play for me, its… letting go, being free. Doing things differently, like things you never think you will do. Exploring different things and just letting go, and be happy, happiness, just being free… for me that's play, letting go' (Participant D, Appendix A).

'Having fun… being spontaneous… play is playing (laughter)… Oh it's so difficult… what is play? Doing stuff that makes us happy, that makes us laugh, that, that distracts us… so you doing stuff that you might be feeling and while you doing it you feeling kind of, this is fun, oh look let's do this, that, that… as you doing it ideas are coming. So as you playing, especially when you see like children, they playing in the mud or whatever and they've got their little trucks or whatever it is… no no let's put a road here, oh… let's use these sticks for the bridge… and… and it's almost like… it like builds and it like… So it's something, something an activity that almost builds, you know builds up as it goes as well. And if you consider just like playing around with a friend and then you chase and then you stop and then you, so it's an activity that is… allowing for creativity and building upon itself as it, as it goes alone' (Participant E, Appendix A).

'I would say play is an indication of one's inner child. And for children play is an expression of whatever they are feeling' (Participant F, Appendix A).

As discussed, play is unique to the player and can be defined quite differently by individuals. However, in an attempt to define play for the purpose of this research, six primary themes seem evident in the participants' responses which align with the theoretical definitions. Firstly, Huizinga's notion of play 'absorbing the player intensely and utterly' (Huizinga, 1949: 13) can be paralleled with Participant A's definition of play holding meditative qualities. Both ideas suggest that play is an activity that occurs in its own space and time, engulfing the player within its own playful boundaries.

Secondly, the notion of play is associated with freedom, an activity that according to (Brown, 2009, Huizinga, 1949) and a number of the participants creates a sense of liberty. Play is a voluntary activity that in and of itself promotes a sense of freedom from other mundane matters. Thirdly, many of the participants agree with the theories that suggest that play is an activity that is fun and enjoyable, leaving the player feeling a sense of satisfaction. The fourth theme evident in many of the definitions is the notion of imaginary and physical play, corresponding to (Bodrova and Leong, 2015, Slade, 1970) definitions of personal, projective and imaginative play. The fifth, in conjunction with the fourth, is the creative and exploratory qualities of play and its contribution to development and creative activity. Lastly, the sixth theme is that of the therapeutic value of play and how play can be a channel of self-discovery and emotional expression.

In this section, each of the six participants defined play according to a personal understanding based on life experience. All six definitions can run parallel to the play literature, as there are distinct recurring themes emphasised by the participants which mirror and echo the proposed theories. These six themes, namely playful meditation, freedom, fun, imaginative or embodied play, explorative play and expressive play, together with play for play's sake, contribute to the way in which play is defined in this research paper and the way in which it was presented in the research process and creative outcomes.



Methodology



This section discusses the various methodologies used within the study. They are methodologies drawn from multiple fields that have all contributed to the research and its outcomes. Each methodology in its own right has played a role in exploring the complexity of personal play and its relationship to the adult woman in a therapeutic process. Furthermore, the chosen methodologies have guided the fluidic manner of the research process, aiding in its development and ultimately its findings.

Qualitative Research

Stuart Brown (2009) suggests that a play history is a journey of recall through past and present playful experiences that stimulates emotional association. He advocates that this recall reminds the individual of her playful, joyous self and in a sense, invites that playful self into her current life (Brown, 2009). Brown's notion of personal play history (2009) was a key factor in the research process, as it referred to the personal journey of play in the participant's past and present selves. If deconstructed, it can be divided into three core elements, namely: personal, play and history. The first element, personal, relates to the individual – the person at play, the client, the storyteller. The second element, play, refers to the activity – the moment, the experience or the story told. The third component refers to the memory and recall. These key elements grounded the research process as they shaped the topics of discussion. At each stage, the personal, the play and the memory informed methodological choices and ultimately the final presentational outcome. However, due to its qualitative nature, the process, with its six individual narratives, did not display a repetitive representation of personal play histories, but rather hybrids of the term. In other words, methodological choices allowed for various aspects of the personal to be expressed, it permitted for an open form of telling and sharing and invited a free response and interpretation to the definition of play history.

The research took on an arts-based research approach which, together with methods of narrative enquiry and Playback Theatre, attempted to represent the personal, the play and the history. Furthermore, cultural affiliation and emotional reflection arose throughout the interview process, which then influenced the reflective methodology. The fluidic approach to the interview process welcomed all forms of response and invited interactions. These interactions became part of the process which in turn influenced the research aims and objectives.

Ethnography

There are a number of forms of enquiry that can be employed within a qualitative research paradigm, one of which is ethnography. Ethnography is primarily a research method that is used to observe and investigate day-to-day activities within cultures, engaging the researcher's overt or covert participation while witnessing and listening to data shared or displayed by the research subjects within their environments (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007)

Furthermore, Alsop notes that:

> 'Practicing ethnography means shifting one's notion of centre and periphery and coping with the complexity of multiple centres with multiple peripheries' (Alsop, 2002).

This suggests that ethnography is a process in which a researcher recognises multiple truths that all contribute to a deeper understanding of a subject. In many respects, these truths are grounded within a cultural context that has influenced personal experience and perspective. This includes Alsop's (2002) notion of the researcher's personal truth and the researcher's ethnographic ability to shift from one's own centre and recognise the multiple truths that contribute to knowledge.

The research invited six participants to engage in a process of individual, open interviews. The conversation began with each participant being asked to define play according to her own understanding, after which she was encouraged to narrate her earliest and/or greatest moments and memories of play. There was no defined expectation regarding how the conversation would take shape or the understanding of play. The term itself was at play, in that the participant held the knowledge and it was she who defined her centre. Although the research had an intention, the responses shared from the participants, the data led the outcome. With this in mind, one could debate the ethnographic validity of the research process, as the research did not aim to investigate a cultural phenomenon within a particular environment. However, the discussion of culture and ethnographic enquiry is relevant according to Sutton-Smith who defines play according to social rhetoric, linking play to culture and considering it a cultural phenomenon (Sutton-Smith, 1997). This suggests that the study of play may be considered ethnographic.

The definition of ethnography in its own right is debated by multiple theorists, resulting in an overlap of meaning with other qualitative methods of enquiry (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer, 2005). This can be justified by the close relationship that exists

between qualitative methods and the multi-faceted nature of these forms of research. One characteristic that is commonly identified within qualitative enquiry is that of reflexivity. Reflexivity can be defined as the process of acknowledging the multiple roles of the self in relation to the research process and encompasses reflecting on our personal interpretations, perspectives and relationships to that which we are researching and recognising its subjective value (Berry, 2011).

Inter-subjectivity

In a chapter entitled *The Ethnographic Self as Resource: An Introduction*, Peter Collins and Anselma Gallinat quote social anthropologist Edmund Leach (1984):

> 'The data which derive from fieldwork are subjective and not objective. I am saying that every anthropological observer, no matter how well he/she has been trained, will see something that no other such observer can recognise, namely a kind of harmonic projection of the observer's own personality. And when these observations are 'written up' in monograph or any other form, the observer's personality will again distort and purported 'objectivity'' (Leach cited in Collins and Gallinat, 2010: 17).

When she remembers Belgium
And starts to smile
Performed for strangers
Street theatre style
She made them all laugh and giggle accord
She caused them to dance and sing and applaud
When she thinks of those days, she thinks of the glee
The happiness felt, the play to be free
I'm honoured because she felt open to say
That those days were her greatest moments of play
(The Storybook, Appendix F)



'Wow (Smiling)

Yes, like, I'm saying even when you read it, it's like wow, it's a wow to me because you taking me back, and you make me realise that I've been a happy person in my

> life and I've been open to other people and I've been giving, so maybe now it's time for me to receive as well, as I've been giving… but it's amazing and it's bold. It's big for me how you read it, you, you made it sound, powerful and it's like you see a hurricane when you start… It's starting like brr and then poof. Yes, it's like that when you were reading it, I was like oh wow that's amazing, it's amazing, it is' (Participant D, Appendix D).

Irrespective of the field of humanitarian work, qualitative research entails an inter-subjective account, a connection represented by the prefix 'inter' that exists among 'subjects' (Reich, 2010). This inter-subjectivity is referred to by Leach as a 'harmonic projection' (1984) that should not be undermined or rejected, but rather applied as a thread that connects the observer or researcher to the subject. In other words, it should be acknowledged as a factor that contributes to the research outcome and not ignored by assuming objectivity. Inter-subjective relationships that are formed between researcher and participant can often contribute to the legitimacy of the research process and the authenticity of its outcome (Bradfield, 2012). My personal response to the stories and memories shared was undoubtedly subjective, as I engaged with the participants directly, observed, responded and captured their narratives not as a blank slate, but as a present witness and interactive being. I consciously acknowledged my subjective account and attempted to steer it towards forming an inter-subjective relationship with each participant individually. Through my personal 'harmonic projection', I interacted, listened and reflected, and the inter-subjective relationship that formed between me as the researcher and each participant weaved its way through the process.

Objective Subjectivity

> 'One who is totally immersed in the subjective may be too close to a range of personal feelings to be fully useful' (Potash, 2013: 159).

While acknowledging that subjectivity is inevitable and embracing the role that it plays, I simultaneously attempted to recognise the requirement for objective distancing. Although it was I who listened and I who reflected back, the research employed a listening style that attempted to embrace the notion of objectivity. This was achieved through a form of experiential listening (Friedman, 2005) in which various aspects of the participant's narrative were carefully reflected back to her. By reflecting back the objective essence of what the participant had shared, I tried to ensure that I had understood it objectively. Experiential listening is defined by Friedman as

> ‘An empathetic, supportive, noninterfering way of saying back to a person the felt essence of his or her message and checking with the person to make sure it has been said back correctly’(Friedman, 2005: 218)

Friedman’s (2005) experiential approach to listening is one that is grounded in psychotherapeutic work. It is based on a combination of Carl Roger’s client-centred ‘reflection of feeling’ (Friedman, 2005: 220) and Eugene Glendin’s ‘experiential method’ (Friedman, 2005: 220). It is a form of listening that captures that which is said together with that which is unsaid, reflecting it back to the speaker for validation or correction. It is the combination of the literal spoken word with a sensed empathetic connection between the listener and the shared narrative.

Experiential listening (Friedman, 2005) can thus be the unprecedented blend between the inter-subjective relationship and the notion of objective distancing, an interaction and connection formed between two independent beings, one (the participant) who offers a personal narrative and the other (the researcher) who is present to listen and reflect back. This creative combination of inter-subjective connection and objective validation, experiential in structure, established the nature of interactions within the research process and will further be referred to as playful listening. The research attempted to capture and reflect six personal play histories by eliciting each participant’s inner playful self through memory recall. Two main objectives can be identified in this research structure, namely, sharing the inner playful self and capturing and reflecting the shared narratives.

And I know when she thinks of Lagos, Nigeria

She thinks of bright blue, she thinks of hysteria

She thinks of joy, happiness and sun

She thinks of the play, she thinks of the fun

She remembers the cards, she remembers the dice

She remembers playing and that play was nice

(The Storybook, Appendix F)



> ‘I loved my poetry… I don’t know about others, but mine was… perfect… that was beautiful. That was total essence of what I told you… but for me, it was just beautiful, so I liked that’ (Participant C, Appendix D).

Playful Listening

The research process grounded itself in the landscape of play, as it not only explored the participants' playful selves, but also used various aspects of play to capture, play back and replay the data. Its reliance on play provided a space for word, body, image and sound to mutually express moments of the recall, sharing personal play memories playfully. As the researcher, I too accessed my playful self which allowed an inter-subjective relationship to form between my inner play and the participants' inner play. I consciously noted connections and differences between my play memories and those of the participants' which nurtured a playful inter-subjective relationship. Play became a shared language, as it held both the researcher's and the participants' inner playful selves, forming a connection between the two.

Additionally, the research process itself, encompassing the one-on-one interactions and later the group interaction, was playful in structure as it used experiential collaboration to share. The process relied on play as the central mode of communication, offered by the participants and listened to by the researcher. This can be linked to experiential listening, as the notion of a sensed experiential flow facilitated a playful interaction between the participants' narratives and my reflections. The acknowledging, repeating, capturing and reflective processes all created a back and forth playful exchange which required authentic listening to help represent the legitimacy of the memories. The interaction required this playful listening to objectively recognise the contextual, emotional and unspoken content of the shared stories and to honour the personal relevance to each of the participants.

Furthermore, the play element in the playful listening became a key component in the creative research paradigm. The methods employed in the research were forms of play that the participants had either mentioned during the various interactions or were drawn from drama therapeutic methods. The research used these shared forms of play to represent the narratives, creating a representation that not only captured the content of the story but also the form of play in which the narrative took place or alluded to.

> 'So now I'm just going to invite you to draw, to draw play. However that comes out, or whatever you feel you can just reflect on paper. So here are some colours
>
> So drawing play?
>
> Whatever comes to mind with relation to play, the idea of play

I just want to feel the crayons, to me that's part of it… cause I love… ooh they're so nice and smooth… so this actually just me feeling the crayons, this isn't me depicting play (laughter)

Perhaps you're playing

(Drawing) so you're actually recording now, it's interesting cause you're recording as I play' (Participant E, Appendix C).

Listening has subjective tendencies as the associations elicited by words trigger their own meaning within the listener's memory and therefore, despite collective understanding, experiences are unique. Human interactive research draws this subjectivity towards the notion of the other with an intention to learn, gain and broaden knowledge. Thus, the relationship between the researcher and participants is once again an interactive negotiation of truths. Playful listening was a tool used to capture an authentic portrayal of the shared narratives, an objective which could only be achieved by acknowledging the various perspectives that existed within the interactions. The language of play facilitated the interactions and assisted in my listening, as I relied on this shared connection to assist in harmonising the subjective and objective dimensions.

Playful Listening Roles

Furthermore, my subjectivity encompassed various roles that were present throughout the research process. I played the roles of researcher and Drama Therapist, researching play from a drama therapeutic perspective, as well as the roles of a player and artist who engaged creatively in play. In all four roles, namely researcher, therapist, player and artist, I was required to both listen and play. As a creative researcher studying to become a Drama Therapist, I constantly reflected on my various roles. The roles of researcher and therapist encouraged me to listen, while the roles of player and artist guided the playful interaction. Together, all four roles guided and supported the notion of playful listening. The playfulness of the listening formed the inter-subjective relationship between the roles I played and the participants' playful selves. Each role held significance, contributing to the reflections presented and the urge to respect each memory and moment. My playful inner self, researcher, future Drama Therapist and creative practitioner all played their parts in capturing the data, responding to the data, and carefully forming an honourable representation of the memories and stories shared.

Narrative Enquiry

> 'It is equally correct to say 'inquiry into narrative' as it is 'narrative inquiry'. By this we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and names the pattern of inquiry for its study. To preserve this distinction we use the reasonably well-established device of 'story' and the inquiry 'narrative'. Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience' (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990: 2)

As proposed by Connelly and Clandinin (1990), narrative storytelling was used as a fundamental component of the approach throughout the research process. It was used for the data collection where each participant was asked to tell her play memory through story, the narratives of which were gathered and compiled into a representational storybook, as well as the container in which the data was shared, namely the presentation-installation. However, the reflective narrative was not an exact re-enactment of the data – although it aimed to be as true to the memory and experience as possible, it could not and did not replicate it. It relied on narrative formation and metaphoric representations to tell its story, described by Caine et al (2017) as fictionalization. In their article entitled *Exploring the Purpose of Fictionalization in Narrative Inquiry*, Caine et al. (2017) propose three purposes of using fictionalization in a narrative methodology. They suggest that fictionalization can be used to protect and blur identities, that it can be used as a process of creating an additional form of telling and that imaginative distancing can create another level of understanding (Caine et al., 2017). These three aspects can form part of various methodologies noticeably fitting into the construct of narrative enquiry (Caine et al., 2017) and were employed throughout the research process. The first, blurring identities and respecting confidentiality, was applied in the storybook with the use of general titles and the pronoun 'she'. At no point did the narrative reveal the name of any participant, but instead introduced and represented each individual through metaphoric symbols and idioms. The second is what Caine et al describe as 'Creating an Other to Tell More' (Caine et al., 2017: 217), namely, creating an external character or voice, often brought by the researcher, to give new perspectives and deepen understanding. This too was used in the storybook narrative which not only represented the six research participants, but also gave voice to Play. In other words, Play itself acquired a role that contributed to the complexity of the representation.

'My name is Play and I'm uniquely me

Because I change with each person individually

You see, I belong to you and to you

I belong to her and to you too

But my being is different in each memory

And that's why we call it personal play history'

(The Storybook, Appendix F)

Lastly, the storybook made use of the third and final purpose of fictionalization proposed by Caine et al (2017), in that it relied on imaginative distancing to create an in-depth multi-layered representation. It narrated intimate stories with the intention to protect the participants' vulnerability, using creativity to distance, honour and respect.

Playback Theatre

Playback Theatre is the performance of real life narratives through improvised theatre (Salas, 1983). It presents itself in a space that is divided into performance and audience areas, with the audience ultimately providing the content of what is performed. A voluntary member from the audience is invited into the teller's chair to become the 'Teller' (Salas, 1983). The individual is asked to share a lived experience and then almost instantaneously witnesses moments of the shared narrative as it is reflected back to the audience.

> 'The stories are fragments of lives, often chaotic, half understood by the Teller, without clear beginnings, endings or climaxes. This is the nature of ongoing experience… It is the task of the Conductor, the actors, the musician and the lighting person to receive raw material, filter it through their understanding and inspiration, condense certain aspects of it, expand others – all without discussion – and present Teller and audience with a theatre piece' (Salas, 1983: 18).

Salas (1983) describes how the Conductor, the person who facilitates the interactions, as well as the actors, musicians and lighting technician all require a deep sense of presence in order to listen and reflect back the true essence of what is shared. She notes how the material filters through them and without pre-planning, presents a genuine reflection. This filtering is described by Hannah Fox as 'human connection [and] compassionate listening' (Fox, 2007: 98). The artists present the

essence of what is shared back to the Teller by responding to it through authentic representation and instinct, forming an empathetic human connection. Nick Rowe (2007) argues that it is not the essence of the narrative that is preformed, but rather a subjective response to the shared story. He suggests that the narrative is a 'gift' that is received by the performers and responded to through the medium (Rowe, 2007), noting the fundamental aspect of the actors' subjective personal responses. Regardless, a relationship is formed between the Teller and the Playback performing team in which respect of the narrative shared is pivotal. Playback Theatre invites the personal to be shared and through acclaimed rituals and careful listening, 'an atmosphere of respect, familiarity and safety is held' (Salas, 1983: 18).

Playback Theatre

> '[Is] a personal story [that is] told and immediately enacted in a spirit of respect, [it] creates an atmosphere of deep listening, both on the part of actors and audience' (TheCentreforPlaybackTheatre, 2015)

This deep listening and sense of respect, together with improvised reflection, are key factors that influenced the methodological aspects of the research process. Although Playback Theatre is usually a ritualised performance that is performed in immediate response to the narration, the same techniques promoted by Playback Theatre were employed in the research process, namely authentic representation, compassionate listening and human connection. In fact, an embodied performance was not witnessed at all, but the same use of raw data, carefully listened to and filtered through, created an authentic reflection, representing the essence of the narratives shared. Instead of performance, the research used poetic rhymes, imagery and interactive representations which functioned as ritualised forms that responded to and played back the participants' stories.

Arts-Based Research

Arts-based researcher Shaun McNiff (2008) defines arts-based research as:

> 'The systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies' (McNiff, 2008: 29)

In this quote, McNiff (2008) suggests that arts-based experiences form deeper understandings that can be used as primary forms of knowledge to express, capture, analyse and

present data. This implies that arts-based forms of interpretation and expression, familiar to arts practitioners, are used as primary collective methods throughout a research process.

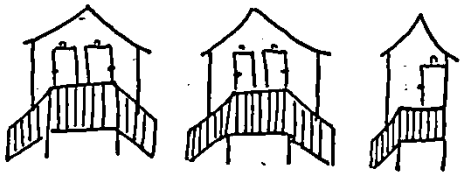
In conjunction, Drama Therapist Phil Jones (2015) proposes that arts-based research:

> 'Breaths and inhabits the art form and process as enquiry: using theatre and drama as *research method* and as *communication of the findings* of its research' (Jones, 2015: 89).

Jones (2015), approaching arts-based research from an artistic as well as therapeutic perspective, agrees with McNiff (2008) that creative moments described and embodied in the process itself can further be used in the final representational findings. His definition provides a strong basis for the research process I embarked on, as I approached the research from the particular stand-point of Drama Therapy, yet with the intention to apply an arts-based research methodology. Together with the art forms that were presented and alluded to by the participants themselves, creative methodologies common to drama therapeutic intervention were employed. The intention of the research was to capture the relationships six adult women had with their personal play, and in describing these relationships, creative means were expressed. Forms of storytelling, song and drawing became the mediums used to share these narratives and thus the mediums used to inspire, capture and play back each moment. Although the research was subject-led and fundamentally grounded in the key themes of personal, play and history, by using a creative research approach, the process explored creative methods that formulated and represented the various narratives through the paradigm of play. Mark Flesihman (2012) writes extensively on performance as research and suggests:

> '[That] the performance way of knowing is, by contrast [to traditional or dominant ways of knowing], close, active, immediate, on the move, embodied, sensual, fluid, interactional and affectively engaged' (Fleishman, 2012: 29-30)

I would go one step further and propose that this statement stands true for the extensive forms of arts-based research and can be the basis of what creative modes of knowing ultimately contend. Furthermore, the research study was not distinctly grounded in one specific form of creative methodology, namely embodiment. Through a broad spectrum of art-based enquiry it used various methodologies to establish a comprehensive understanding of the stories shared and represent the playfulness in the data through creative means.



The Storybook

> 'Memory has many aspects which psychologists have not discovered, but of which the poet, who constructs its image, is aware. But the poet is not a psychologist; his knowledge is not explicit, but implicit in his conception of image. The critic, analysing the way remembrance' of the virtual Past is made, is the person who is in a position to discover the intricacies of real memory through the artistic devices that achieve its semblance' (Langer cited in Dryden, 2004).

Imagery

Plato was one of the first philosophers who theorised about the relationship between image and knowledge. His writings articulate the notion of representation and how image cannot duplicate original, but only present a representation of it (Ringbom, 1965). Additionally, Stuart Hall (1997) cites Foucault who theorises that the language of representation can only be translated into knowledge by those who speak that symbolic language. Representation is dependent on the viewer and their interpretation or understanding of what has been presented (Hall, 1997), suggesting that if symbolic language is offered in a variety of forms, it can be interpreted and understood from multiple perspectives. Moreover, if the function of symbolic language is to represent knowledge, it must be accurately aligned with its source. The research process grounded this idea of knowledge in the participants' realm/realities as it asked for each participant to define and articulate play according to her own understanding and personal experience. It gathered a collection of personal play narratives and used forms of play as symbolic languages that presented and represented aspects of the stories shared. Imagery was one of the avenues for representation, with participants being invited to signify play through drawing. A number of the participants responded to this form of representation, as the method itself triggered recall that seemed to hold a profound level of experiential knowledge and symbolic meaning, while others chose not to draw. In response to the former, I used imagery as a method of reflection, drawing in response to the multiple narratives shared. I presented these images back to the participants individually and asked for a genuine response to their symbolism. The images that triggered memory and represented the participant's experiential knowledge were picked and presented in the final storybook.

Poetic Rhyme

In his article entitled *Poetry as Research and as Therapy*, Brian Wakeman (2015) discusses the use of poetry as a form of research as well as a therapeutic experience for the writer and reader. He proposes that poetry can be central to both the process and product of research, that research can be about poetry, that poetry can contain research and that the actual content of the research can be written in poetic verse (Wakeman, 2015). He then considers the relationship between poetry and therapy and suggests:

> 'Writing poetry captures experiences or thinking, compressing and compacting ideas in language, rhythm and form. This capturing can be therapeutic as a more permanent reminder of experience and ideas instead of the fade and loss in memory in all the activity and the business of life. Re-reading poems brings experiences flooding back… reminding of moments of beauty, of pleasure and pain, recalling significant events, refreshing the soul. The poem can freeze experience and make it available for later thought, meditation, and for some readers, thanksgiving and praise' (Wakeman, 2015: 57).

Both rhythm and rhyme were forms of communication that were offered at various intervals throughout the interview process and informed the use of poetic documentation. The research process used poetry to capture and present the shared narratives. Through process response and analysis, the data were recorded and a collection of poetic rhymes compiled to represent core moments in each participant's personal play history. The poetry captured memories and moments that seemed to be distant and out of reach, presenting them in a succinct representation that triggered playful experience and emotional association.

Furthermore, the notion of a storybook capturing imagery and poetic rhyme was self-reflective, as it represented an aspect of my inner child and personal relationship to play, an instance of the inter-subjective relationship that was formed between my personal play history and those of the participants.

A Stop Motion

> 'Computers, with their animation, music, and drawing software can be an integral part of the client-therapist relationship. By combining powerful user-friendly hardware and software in treatment programs, psychological and psychiatric

> institutions, hospitals, schools, and nursing homes, art therapists can develop innovative art therapy techniques… Whether computers can advance art therapy techniques depends entirely on our innate curiosity as artists to explore and investigate this new medium. The possibilities are endless and the results can prove to be greater than we ever expected' (Canter, 1989: 296).

In her chapter entitled *Art Therapy and Computers*, Canter (1989) discusses the advantages of using computers and computer programmes as innovative methods of art therapy. She suggests that the computer provides modes of interaction and expression that can be tremendously therapeutic and can aid in treatment programmes, client-therapist relationships and future therapeutic techniques (Canter, 1989). Although Canter (1989) writes from an arts perspective and discusses the computer from within the therapy space, the research process echoed her perspectives and attempted to use the computer as a device which created a form of representation. The storybook was complete after combining the chosen imagery with the selected poems, yet its finality seemed constrained. Since play was fluid and not fixed for the participants, an authentic representation needed to express the volatility of play. The research therefore used the computer to epitomise a sense of movement, bringing the imagery to life through a stop-motion film. In his book entitled *Stop Motion: Passion, Process and Performance*, Barry J C Purves (2007) describes stop motion as

> 'Something [which] is manipulated moved, incrementally by hand, and the image captured, whether it's a puppet, a pencil drawing, a pile of sand, some clay, a computer image, or paper cut outs. Another increment and another image. When the images are strung together at an appropriate speed, the eye is fooled into thinking something has moved in a continual manner. It has not' (Purves, 2007: 9)



The use of stop motion enabled the storybook to come to life, as it manipulated the images to express a more complex representation of the oral poetry. As each poem was recited at the presentation-installation, its corresponding drawing was brought to life. The manipulated imagery, which invited a multi-faceted representation, could also represent the ritual of recall, as the continual manner in which the memory presented itself was compiled of individual moments that

were strung together as narrative (Dryden, 2004). The stop motion thus embodied the entire interview process, as it represented the individual memories as well as the actual process of recall. Furthermore, the art of stop motion presented a notion of personification, giving human characteristics to a non-human entity, as Phil Jones describes it, 'the act of representing' (Jones, 1996a: 107). Each participant's narrative was personified and brought to life through a distanced representation which gave human characteristics to their respective drawn imagery.

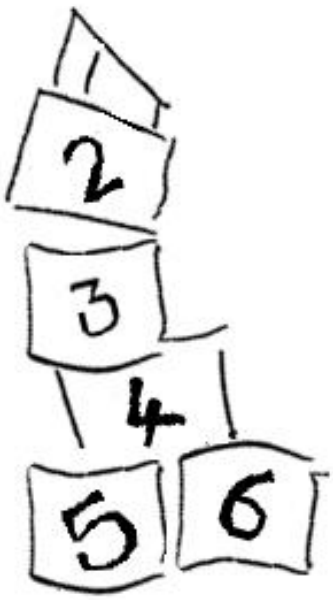
The Installation

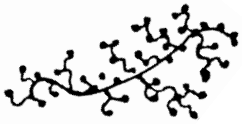
Although the stop motion brought the narratives to life and personified the human attributes and emotional significance, it ultimately existed as a projected outcome. In contrast, play was not a projected product according to the six participants, but was moments that twisted and changed, narratives that were shared, and repetitive interactions that were encountered and encompassed spontaneous in-the-moment experiences. Play was a concept that could not be fixed. Thus, together with the storybook and stop motion, a collective interaction presented at the third and final meeting attempted to bring play to the here-and-now.

> 'We spend much of our lives avoiding the present moment. We yearn for the past, or we are preoccupied by it, or we dream of the future and what it may bring us' (Rowe, 2004: 76).

Although the presentational space presented moments of remembered play, the invitation was to engage with those same forms of play in the here-and-now, in a sense allowing the self to play with those joyful spontaneous moments of playfulness. Therefore, the presentational space needed to be tangible, accessible and playful, inviting the participant-audience to engage in a moment of playful existence. Additionally, the installation grounded itself in a drama therapeutic framework, introducing the notion of embodiment and physical exploration. The installation focussed on these aspects, as its objective was to invite the participants to physically engage with a creative space that was set up to represent and hold their play. A play space which invited them to 'drân' – do (Rowe, 2004) was facilitated by the voice of Play which invited, questioned and evoked the participant-audience to engage with their surroundings. The voice represented the inner playful self and spoke to the individuals in first person. She characterised the notion of an inner playful self, while forming a collective connection between the various bodies and narratives in the space. This was further facilitated with extracts of music and song from the various interviews, sounds which intended to provide a sense of familiarity and comfort, creating an unobtrusive soundscape for playing. The space was designed in a way which attempted to bring the storybook and stop motion

to life, in an attempt to spark, invite and present each of the personal play stories to the six adult women. With large paper imagery, the space was transformed into a life-sized playroom. The use of paper instead of actual play objects was a conscious choice which was influenced by the storybook itself, signifying the content through paper and literally bringing the participant-audience into a life-size storybook. Moreover, the paper imagery provided a distancing tool that allowed for a sense of neutrality and accessibility, inviting anyone to engage in any of the representations. The space was routed with actual street signs that represented the places where the participants' play histories were located, drawing on the personal context and symbolic association. Effort was made to ensure that all aspects of play, or at least the core moments described by each participant, were represented in the space, which threaded in and around the participants' locations and formed connections between the various stories. Lastly, colour was used as an additional tool to represent, facilitate and signify aspects of the research. Small sized colourful chairs were systematically placed around the space to represent the notion of the inner-child, as well as to facilitate places for sitting. Each chair with its respective colour related to a specific participant and was thus placed in proximity to her sign and imagery. Furthermore, actual colouring apparatus were dispersed within the space, which invited the participant-audience to engage in drawing, writing and/or colouring, another playful activity that distilled the notion of the present.





Intersection

Three themes were noted when analysing the participants' narratives and personal associations with playful experiences. The first was the emotional experience play elicits for the player – the meditative quality of play, the joyful fun experience and the act of freedom. The second was the relationship between the notion of play and the idea of an inner child or childhood. The third theme was the contextual element provoked by the term play – the physical place, mental space or circumstantial perspective that the individual associated with her play.

Emotional Experience

The start of the interview process was semi-informal in structure, as it intended to create a bridge between the formalities of research and the personal nature envisioned for the process. A number of participants expressed anxiety, hoping that their responses would be good enough. I reassured these participants that there were no correct answers and explained that play is defined by the individual according to her own understanding and experience, that the individual knows play, she has a personal relationship to play and that it was that narrative that I had come to hear. As with any newly established relationship, the initial stages included careful negotiation. However, from the moment the participant began to define her understanding of play, there was an instantaneous shift. As words were expressed, her body reacted – as each definition gained momentum, the physical body began to express its relationship to play. Each woman defined her play verbally, using various words to capture her understanding, yet simultaneously responded to the notion of play through her body, expressing non-verbal associations and embodied representations that were all positive in nature, including hand gestures, smiles and laughter. As mentioned, these definitions were shared by the participants in the initial stages of the process, correlating play to expressions of enjoyment, freedom, fun and spontaneity. Although this innate sense of joy lingered throughout all six interviews, as the process continued and memories of play were accessed, other emotions were triggered and shared.

> 'So, I remember mostly the, good play. The bad play I usually put it back there and sort of forget about it. Unless if you really think about it, and then you're like, oh when was that other time when I felt like I wasn't liked, or you know, when you were isolated or something like that. When other kids didn't want to play with you, whatever it is' (Participant B).

> ‘My childhood I must admit it was just the play, the fun, just pure joy, that time, later times, a lot of heartache and some other things mixed with the joy’ (Participant C, Appendix C).

> ‘I don’t know why I think of that little house, I just think, that’s very interesting actually, it makes me want to cry (deep breathing) (beginning to cry). I don’t know because I feel like, if that is my favourite memory I feel a little bit sad in a way because, because like now I’m struggling with the idea of living alone and yet if that’s a good memory shouldn’t that strengthen me, do you know what I mean. So I don’t know, it’s like, I was happy, I was happy in the garden and searching and putting and mixing and yet now I’m like, like, I don’t want to do that alone (deep breath). I don’t know I’m just, I think I’m crying because of the irony in that it made me happy then, why can’t I be happy now’ (Participant E, Appendix C).

> ‘So my earliest memories of play was before my dad died (starting to cry). He died the day after my fifth birthday. That’s when playing stopped. I’ve got memories, and then this terrible, and it was through my most vulnerable years of post-father’s death, brother’s hospitalisation, going to Kimberly’ (Participant F, Appendix C).

At first, the definitions of play were positive, as it seemed that the term play needed to be associated with good. However, whilst accessing these personal memories and narrating their stories, the individuals accessed moments that held darker emotional recall. This is not to say that play needs to be a term which holds both positive and negative connotations, but rather to comment on the fundamental value and significance of play. At the heart of the discussions, all six women spoke of joyful memories, moments throughout their lives that were and are remembered and cherished for their playful quality. Yet, at the same time, the memories, associations, recollections and experiences of play or lack thereof, are linked to the adult self and trigger a complex series of emotions that exist in what comes across as the simplicity of play.

I attempted to represent these emotional associations through the methods. With the use of rhythmic poetry, imagery and other sensory media such as light, voice and music, I hoped to carefully touch on the emotional associations the individuals linked with play. The voice of Play, present in the storybook and during the installation, was gently designed to trigger emotional associations while holding the vulnerability of each memory.

Inner Child or Childhood

When asked to define play and to speak back to personal play, a number of participants alluded to the child. Whether it was with reference to personal childhood experiences, childlike behaviours, inner-child selves, children or grandchildren, the adults associated play with the role of the child, the assumption being that play is an activity experienced and expressed by children. It is in fact the language of childhood, a language that carries the earliest forms of emotional and physical expression, as Stuart Brown suggests:

> 'Childhood is where it all begins, the time of life when play comes naturally' (Brown, 2009: 79-80).

After the initial request to define play, the researcher asked the participant to think of her earliest and fondest memories of play, moments or times when play seemed natural. A number of participants shared childhood memories, while for others later experiences held fonder moments. Using Brown's (2009) play history as a point of entry, the research accepted the natural relationship children have with play and used the term inner-child to represent that relationship. The title of this research, *Inner child, can we play*, did not necessarily call upon the participant to come and play as a child, but rather invited her inner-child to access her play. In other words, the research was not necessarily asking about childhood play, but was rather attempting to trigger the relationship between her adult self and her inner playful voice, a voice that has existed since childhood in an inner part of her that knows and remembers her relationship with play, playing and playfulness.

The interview process elicited an inner-child for all six women, the recall allowing for a playful self to be revealed and shared. For some it was a playful self that was familiar and for others it was a forgotten or distant part of the self.

> 'Let's say like now… I'm so stressed, there's this, there's this, there's that, I'm like oh my goodness what am I going to do? It's so frustrating. The kids will come… and I'll be like guys let's start rehearsal… then we start playing. I completely, completely forget about everything. When I come out from that rehearsal space I'm smiling, I'm jumping, you know, I'm open, I'm totally different from when I walked into that space. So it's a space of change' (Participant, A, Appendix C).

> 'I would say, I like playing, I miss actually playing, or where I used to be the main character in the play. Now I'm like secondary, I'm like the teacher, you know, the

supervisor, the sports coach. I'm like the coach now and it's not as fun as being the actual player, most of the time' (Participant B, Appendix C).

'My childhood, those times. All the other times have other things connected to it so they are not as much fun. University days, I had fun, I had play, you know, but then other things, I was older so other things they are connected to that play, so it's not so bright' (Participant C, Appendix C).

'It's just that you made me realise something I was never thinking of and its fun. Cause it's like… its rejuvenating cause for me as I said play is just being free and realising that I do it at home… It makes me feel good' (Participant D, Appendix C).

'I just, I do want to say that I wish, I wish, even though I'm playful, I really believe I'm playful, I just wish I would play more, even more. You know, I think I'm always, you know how we are, people say we're our own harshest critics and I, I just wish that I could let that go and just like, I don't know' (Participant E, Appendix C).

'I loved imaginary games, and I taught my children to play imaginary games, where we could be just in this room and we could actually be, imagine, a place, and my husband was also very good at it, where we could play imaginary games. When I was very, even when I was very small, okay, I participated in the games with my friends even before we went to Kimberley, but you block them, like when I first started here, I didn't remember those imaginary games, in fact there's a lot that I don't remember but I would remember… if I had to think about it' (Participant F, Appendix C).

An inner-child was present for all six women, an inner-child who knew and reminded them of their personal relationship to play, which then led to reflections about their adult selves, adults and play. This then inspired the formation of the storybook, a childlike representation for their adult selves. Furthermore, it inspired the final presentation and the voice of Play inviting each participant to play with her inner-child, her playful inner self.

In response to the repeated theme of the child, the interviewer then asked the participant whether she played as an adult woman.

‘I realised that every time when I play I become, I go into a certain world, a world that, I don’t know whether as adults we are afraid of that world maybe we think that world is not suitable for us or you know’ (Participant A, Appendix C).

‘I do play as an adult. But there does. Ah, adult play feels different hey (laughter). Ye, I do, I do, I still do play as an adult. Like the fun part, like the part I was saying, like with my sisters, we still do the acting out, we still do the jesting, we still do the describing things with sound, those ones are still constant. Then I play with my husband, but in a different way… in a different way entirely. Ye, play is still there. Not as much as there as when I was a child, now comes to think of it. We need to find time to play’ (Participant C, Appendix C).

‘So growing up, things changed, you know, when you grow up you get a lot of filters, like girls can’t do this. You can’t be this loud, you have to wear skirts and not pants in certain places like going to church. There are a lot of filters that go about that makes sure that we lose some of our play, because you’re older now, you’re a teenager, you can’t be seen playing that, you know. You move on to different types of play… but lesser. I would say, as you grow up. Until you have babies, then you go back to everything. You want to teach them every single play that you know… So it’s like a cycle. But with me and my husband, we do a lot of play, chase each other whatever, every now and then, lighten up the whole space. Go cycling, jogging. But other than that, we enjoy each other’s company, we play in a different way, but, to each other we sort of get that inner child. To the two of us we can do anything but around friends and family and colleagues we have to fold your legs a certain way, you can’t say this, you can’t say that, you know. That’s why I’m saying as an adult you get filtered a lot’ (Participant B, Appendix C).

‘No, adults don’t play. I play alone, sometimes even at home I try to play with my family cause we sing crazily, we do crazy things, just many things you know. Cause it comes naturally to me to just do that and no one stops me and they allow me at home. Now they’re getting it and they’re doing it with me now, so it’s like, this is my space to be free and then I do it. But when I’m around other people I contain myself like everyone. Even if, even if when I feel like, I wish I could do this here cause I feel the space allows me, but I hold because the environment doesn’t say

do it, or the people that I am around, you can see they're conservative so it's like they will say I'm crazy, so I just hold, I hold myself' (Participant D, Appendix C).

'I don't think they play enough because if they are playing, we're not necessarily seeing it, maybe they play when they're making love, maybe they, you know, maybe they play when they're cooking and being stupid 'no I told you not to put the onions there but now you putting the onions there' and then throw wet cloth at the friend or partner or I don't know… so there moments of play but I think you're raising a very interesting thing of the extent to which we consciously play or not or you know and… It's interesting… Ya… there probably just isn't enough play… In the world. So I know for example by helping to run youth group at church I said look, I will do games. I will do the warming up, the getting to know each other through the type of drama games that I do, because I knew that that would help to relax the group, break the ice, you know… this kind of thing… warm them up like physically as well as just like… just relax them. So… where as someone else would say well I can come to youth group and I will offer to give a talk, and that's the last thing I'd offer to do (laughter). I would rather offer to say no let me do something fun. To get people to… to access that part of themselves that allows them to have fun and drop boundaries really' (Participant E, Appendix C).

'I think often we are playing, we're often playing a very important role, often our whole lives are play representing either how we're feeling, what we'd like to feel, or how we don't want to feel at all… as adults, with adults. That is what I think… except if you're playing with a child, as an adult. You're playing with a child, you steer the child to forms of play that you think are good for that child, where you might have missed out on that in your own childhood. I believe role play is an adult thing, okay, but I was role playing from the age of five… And it was, I quite enjoyed it. I mean I was aware that I was role playing, so I played my role, and I got quite good at it' (Participant F, Appendix C).

According to each participant, the adult woman does play, but, as emphasised, it is a different play to that which she experienced in childhood. It is a play that is structured by external or circumstantial factors, is dependent on her environment and is only accessible in the company of specific others, predominantly shared with loved ones or children. In almost all six interview-discussions, there were moments of inner-child connections where the participant emphasised the

therapeutic value of looking back and connecting past play memories and moments to current selves. The notion of the child was often a stimulus in the reflections, as personal childlike selves and/or playful interactions with children evoked and reminded them of their personal affiliations with play and the innate enjoyment of playing. Again, this inspired the essence of the contents presented back to the participants in the installation. The storybook, stop-motion and final presentation-installation were all frameworks that attempted to play back and reflect memories and moments of the inner playful self to the adult participant, reminding her of her relationship with play and inviting her to access it.

Play and Context

> 'Autobiographical memories tend to be unique events that happen[ed] at a specific place, at a specific time' (Bauer, 2007: 21)

Place and time are characteristics of autobiographical memory that Patricia Bauer includes in her book *Remembering the Times of Our Lives* (2007). She emphasises that when a person recalls autobiographical memory using a coherent narrative structure, the factors of where and when become key contributors to the recall. By questioning where and when, the notion of place and time become cue words that trigger memory and locate it within a specific setting and time-frame, deepening recall (Bauer, 2007).

> 'You know… every environment, every space you go to there's a different way obviously you going to play. There's open environments there's closed environments. So you know that there's a specific type of playing that is going to be happening. So you are aware… I can't wait to play with my cousin this… I can't wait to do this. You know I grew up in a very… I didn't grow up in town. My parents, my mom stayed in town and my dad stayed in town so I stayed with my grandmother back on the farms. So all our games… it was like from the time you were done with your chores… its playing' (Participant A, Appendix C).

> 'It was in the street cause we used to live in Alex so, in Eastbank which is like the quieter side of Alex, and our streets were very quiet so… there weren't really taxi's going through it or anything like that. So… we would have sections where we would play between my house and all of the kids from the street would be friends. You know, we would go to the next street and the other people will be

our rival friends so when they come over and it's our team against theirs… it was a wonderful thing, so, playing out in the street, and the freedom. Other plays I remember would be when I go back to my mom's home, where she comes from, from the village. We had different types of play there, cause we would play with like, I don't know what they call it, but we called it like Diketo, where you'd actually take a stone, throw it up and take out some other stones and then put back, it's sort of like a counting game' (Participant B, Appendix C)

'At home, in Nigeria. Lagos. We lived in Lagos, we lived together, all thirteen of us. It was just that we went to schools and then we came back, so we were living together. It's home, I still call that place home. Although I have moved away from it a long time ago' (Participant C, Appendix C).

'The first show we did it in Belgium, and, what we were doing, we were singing, we were dancing which is, that's normally what we do. But there we were doing some funny actions, grabbing people on the stage dancing with them and then crying, laughing, making jokes to people, going around. So it was like we were not thinking too much of anything we were just being in the space of making people happy at that moment' (Participant D, Appendix C).

'My parents decided to leave Zim and to go live in Kimberly (forced cough) it was delightful and I remember sitting… oh no, it might have been a different house, I was a bit older, it was different house, and I sat again close to the gate I don't know why, and I sat and I sang a song, I sang this song, *Kimberly, Kimberly, let's go live in Kimberly with all the rocks we'll tell them pull up their socks or else we won't go live in Kimberly*, can you believe it' (Participant E, Appendix C).

'It took place in Orange grove and in Cape Town on Muizenburg beach ah where we used to go to my aunt where there was like, everyone used to get there, there was no money, but we used to go there for holidays and there were eight children, we used to sleep eight on the floor and then we would go to Muizenburg everyday… And he loved lying in the sun, and we would bring him buckets from the sea and because I was the youngest I was the cutest. So I would be the one to be playing' (Participant F, Appendix C).

The participants referred to specific places throughout the research process. While some emphasised particular locations, others referred to 'place' more generally, describing the environment and its significance to the recall. Nevertheless, place became an imperative factor in the overall process, as it held contextual relevance to the stories and memories. Locating play contributed to the value of the narrative, providing a landscape for the personal to be shared. Furthermore, it added to the overall analysis of the research as it allowed for similarities and differences to be noted and expressed in the various creative outcomes.

One of the contextual elements that seemed pivotal to the overall process was the similarity and differentiation between the actual play that was engaged in. The same game or forms of play were being played in different contexts and called by different names, as each participant defined or named her play according to her context.

> 'I played a lot of hide and seek. I think we loved a lot of hide and seek. And we used to play something called intsuma, so it's like… it's marbles… so what happens is… we have marbles… we all have marbles… oh my goodness… we used to… we used to even keep pocket money to buy them… like if you had a lot of marbles you felt like a hero. [And] there's a game called Shumpu, so Shumpu, its ball, its playing with the ball. They call it die or Shumpu. So what it is is you make a ball out of plastics. You take newspaper and you make it wet, it mustn't be too wet cause it's going to be very sore. Then, you put a plastic on top of it to make it like round and tie it very well, and then you start playing and hitting each other with the ball. Once it hits you, you are out' (Participant A, Appendix C).

> 'We used to play a lot of skipping ropes, we would do a lot of hide and seek and we would do this other game, I don't know what it's called but it's basically… somebody… it's sort of dodge ball… but if you get hit by the ball then you're out. We would have a tennis ball, usually, because that's the, well, there's also… if somebody really wants to hit you with force, it be very painful' (Participant B, Appendix C).

> 'We had this one, these square things; can I call it in my language? We had one we used to call Suwe, I've seen it here. You drew like six squares and then we used to jump in it, I've seen it on films. I think they do it here or they do it in America. You know, you jump on it, you count. Then we used to do the skipping things. We had

lots of games on the outside, there was this one, hide and seek, you know, old man's bluff, and a whole lot of other games like that' (Participant C, Appendix C).

'We played, we called it Ibhathi. So we had a tennis ball. So maybe it's a group here (drawing) maybe we are ten, its five five, or let's say four four… and then we had a ball, a tennis ball. And then we will have tins. So… the challenge was with the tins. So we'll have the ball and we would choose four this side, and these ones, the first one, would have to hit this four so that they can't do the tins… So if maybe they hit me, I duck, I run and do the tins, the other four will come and help, then we'll say Shigago, we jump the tins and we run to the circle and there be a square here. If all the four of us are in the square, we take that ball and we had to hit the tins cause they are, and if you make them fall, they have to make sure that, because we won we have to make the tins to fall. But if the four of us will miss all the tins, now it is their turn. So it's us to now make sure that we hit them with the ball before they get into the square… I don't know if I am explaining well. And we have Umgusha foot, the one you take a pantyhose, you cut the pantyhose and then one stands that side one stands this side with the pantyhose, and then you come inside the pantyhose, we go out, we do a fish, we go to the that side. We do one, two three, we come this side and so (showing) it starts here (ankles) it goes here (knees) with the pantyhose, it goes there (bum) it goes there (underarms) it goes there (neck), if we jumping very well it goes up' (Participant D, Appendix C).

'I… It was playing on my own, whereby; I think I asked my parents to, asked the gardener to help me to build a house… I remember that was my little house and one of the things that I remember was… collecting berries in the garden and I think there were little red berries and maybe some mud, and maybe there were leaves, they all constituted different little dishes or whatever for, I don't know, I don't know if I had a family in there, like an imaginative family or, but the thing that I remember is like the collecting and the putting.

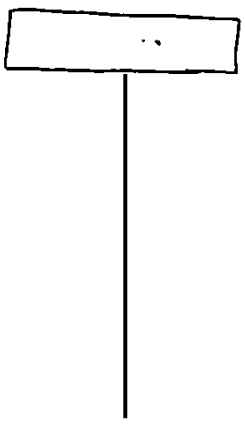
We were in Zimbabwe I think it was five years, standard one up to standard five, so one of the things that is actually quite strong and I'm not sure where it falls, probably around the same year was… with friends from school, was playing that elastic game where you have an elastic and two are holding the big elastic and you go in, out, in, on, in, out whatever, so and you put the elastic higher and

higher, so that's quite a strong memory, and around the same time.[And] Sarah… had a swimming pool and there was deep imaginative stuff going on in that swimming pool of different worlds and stuff like that' (Participant E, Appendix C).

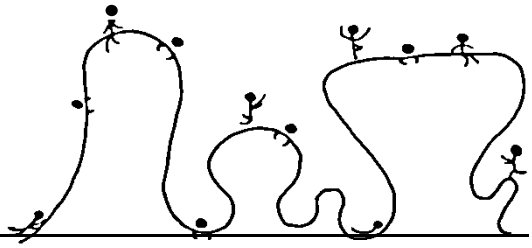
'We had a band and we used to play on tins, we used to drum on tins and… in fact we used to bath early and go into the street and play whatever game we played, and we did, we did play, we did play.
I never played hopscotch.
I did love, love imaginary play, where, in those days there weren't, there was no TV, there was nothing, and when I did play with friends in Kimberley, we used to construct things over the pool and imagine that we were mermaids or things… I was able to enjoy imaginary play and spend eight hours around something imaginary, and I was able to do imaginary play with myself. I used to sit in my room and play the most lovely games in my head with whatever was there, whether it was my doll or my bed or whatever' (Participant F, Appendix C).

The beauty of this contextual factor is that even though the participants were from unique contexts, were of varying ages, and experienced life in diverse socio-economic environments, play formed a connecting factor. The roads that housed their playful memories were roads that linked to others and the element of personal lived experience paralleled the notion of a shared collective knowledge. This was further articulated in the fifth stage of the research, where invited guests were brought into the presentational space and were offered to experience the process. The street signs that represented the initial six participants also seemed to trigger memories for the others. Although the actual location may have been different, the contextual element sparked recall.

This element of context became one of the fundamental factors in the research, as it not only held the narrative of each individual, but also linked the individual to the collective and the collective to the universal. The street sign was used throughout the research as a metaphoric symbol for this contextual factor.



Bigger Picture



The research aimed to explore the relationship between six adult women and their playful inner selves. Through an individual interview-discussion process, each participant was invited to narrate her personal play memories and connect her recall to her current self. In addition to the spoken narrative, the research used creative forms of play extracted from the interviews as methods of telling and sharing, inviting the participants to respond to their recall through modes of creative expression. As the researcher, I listened and while listening to each personal story that was being shared, I attempted to note facial language, body language, voice and tone. I then transcribed the verbal interactions and together with the projected data, responded to each narrative through various arts-based forms of expression. I returned to the participants individually and presented my representations to them, requesting feedback, comments or criticism. The aim was for the representation to capture each inner child, her personal play and its relationship to her adult self. I then edited and enriched the reflections through additional forms of playful representations and invited the participants to experience and witness their narratives in an interactive presentation. The study was divided into five stages that developed and adapted as the process matured.

Contributions

Various components of the research process contribute to the knowledge of play and methodology in Drama Therapy. Firstly, the process employed a listening style that is referred to as playful listening. This implies that the listening and documenting of the stories shared were responded to in a playful way. The research asked for the participant to access her inner playful self and required the researcher to do the same. The researcher was not only an objective observer, but also a partner in the recall, a co-player and playful listener. This perspective responds to Donald Winnicott (1971):

> 'Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play' (Winnicott, 1971: 38)

The research proposes that through playful listening, embodied or verbal, the therapist can connect to the client's inner playful self by accessing her own inner playful child. It suggests that the adult participant knows play because play was a part of her earliest experiences. Thus, the connection formed between the therapist and participant's inner playful self is at the foundation of the therapeutic relationship.

Methodologically, through arts-based enquiry the research has proposed reflective means that can be employed as playful listening devices. The storybook and stop motion film used rhythmic poetry and imagery to capture, document and reflect narratives, creating an interactive and playful representation of the participant's inner play. This can be considered a contributing factor to drama therapeutic methods, as both the storybook and stop motion film can be techniques used in Drama Therapy. The process can activate playful listening that may be expressed by the client herself, the client and therapist together or by the therapist as a reflective response to the client's narrative, once again forming a foundational relationship between the two playful inner selves.

Secondly, the presentational stage of the process invited the participants to witness reflective representations of their narratives. This was presented through an interactive play space that attempted to literally bring their play memories to life. The space was filled with large paper imagery that represented the various types of play expressed by each participant and formed connections between the respective stories. A voice of Play invited the participants to engage with the space and with the imagery, games and types of play representing their personal memories. The voice invited the participants to play, not necessarily as their childlike selves, but with their inner-child, their memories and a part of themselves. This process mirrored aspects of a Drama Therapy session, as similar to Drama Therapy, it invited the participants to engage with play and with their personal playful selves. It created a space that could be considered a 'play space' which could contribute to further research and discussion around adults and play, Drama Therapy and play, and adults within a drama therapeutic play space.

Additionally, the fifth stage of the process invited guests to experience this play space. The same process was presented, however the guests were not personally aligned with the narratives. Once the process had played out, there was a reflective discussion with the guests in which they expressed a mutual inspiration to narrate personal play histories despite their lack of familiarity with the contents of the presentation. The space, with its narratives, imagery and contexts had triggered memories, creating a cyclical pattern and a forum for other play histories to be shared. This is an additional contribution to drama therapeutic research and interventions.

Lastly, the research provided an introductory platform for adults to Drama Therapy. The storybook, together with the stop motion and final presentation, introduced some of the fundamental aspects of drama therapeutic theory and its methods. This contribution was expressed by the participants themselves who agreed that the process used unobtrusive narrative and creative forms to establish a sense of therapy. They commended the methods and noted that the process did not present itself as therapy, but provided a therapeutic experience. This perhaps contributes insights into effective ways in which Drama Therapy can be promoted to South African adults.

Limitations

The study had a number of limitations. The research interviewed six women who were based in urban Johannesburg, with the English language used as the primary form of communication. This limited the data-set to perspectives from six female participants who were asked to express themselves in a language that was not necessarily their vernacular. Furthermore, the research required the participants to engage in a number of personal interview-discussions which were followed by a final presentation-installation. Five of the six participants were available for their follow-up interview-discussions, which allowed for the narratives to be represented accurately, but only three participants were present at the final presentation. This can be noted as a limitation of the study, as the final playback presentation was only experienced, witnessed and reflected on by three of the six participants.

The research was subjectively led since it was a qualitative study, with both the researcher and the participants responding to the process through personal subjective perspectives. The researcher was in no way removed from the process and responded to and represented the data from a personal standpoint. Additionally, the various responses gathered from the participants themselves were subjective, as they were based on personal experience. This undoubtedly affected the research process and final outcomes, as each contributor brought a unique perspective true to her own reality. Had the research been conducted by a different researcher with other participants, it may have reflected an entirely different outcome. However, the personal perspective and interactive elements required for this type of study could never have been entirely removed from the process and its outcome. This limits qualitative research, yet is a factor that also contributes to the understanding of the humanities. The research approached play from a drama therapeutic perspective, as it placed particular emphasis on the personal relationship the participant had with her play memories and the way in which that recall was listened to and played back. The qualitative nature of this research was thus inherent to the study design and scope of research.

Lastly, the study used an arts-based research approach to process the data and present its outcomes. This could be limiting, as arts-based research is not fully understood by the larger academic community and can be regarded as unscientific, undermined and invaluable (Kossak, 2013). However, together with its limitations, arts-based research provides a platform for research to be explored in a holistic way. It offers a fundamental link between the established academic approach to forming knowledge and the innate physical process of artistic expression, providing a practical means by which arts-based practices can be researched.

> 'Art-based enquiry is at the heart of what we do as art-based therapists. It includes multiple ways of knowing, including affective, sensory, creative, observational and intuitional, as well as through the use of experimentation, risk taking, discovery and meaning making through art making. Art based clinical practice is based on the above ways of knowing, as well as principles of play, improvisation, aesthetics, space, time, rhythm, mind/body or embodied connections. Intersubjective relational qualities of understanding, support, deep listening, a willingness to hold and give space, the ability to tolerate chaotic or unpredictable states, and empathy are also integral parts of artistic enquiry' (Kossak, 2013: 20).

Mitchell Kossak (2013) provides a descriptive parallel between the qualities of art-based enquiry and arts-based clinical practice. He highlights that the two are closely aligned and that the intersection between them can positively influence and broaden knowledge in the field. In conjunction with this, the research used the very essence of what it was researching, forms of play and drama therapeutic methods, to research play and its malleable role in Drama Therapy. The way in which the research was conducted, the participants' reflections and the creative outcomes could all contribute to drama therapeutic practice and the future of research in its field. This may ultimately contribute to the body of knowledge that will bridge the gap between pure academic research and arts-based studies.

Until Next Time

Play is fundamental to Drama Therapy, as it is a mode of expression that grounds drama therapeutic methods and is a language that, together with other factors, forms a part of the foundation of drama therapeutic interventions. Yet, play is complex and ambiguously defined; it has no definitive description and is not experienced by players unanimously. The individual relates to play and playing through personal knowledge, often defining it according to her own lived experience. Additionally, play is a behaviour that is often associated with children – a careless, free activity which is played for play's sake, suggesting that it is not for adults. It is often assumed that adults do not play, and if they do, that their play is different from the careless play that they experienced as children.

The research embraced these various factors and explored the relationship between six adult women and their personal play. It grounded itself within a drama therapeutic paradigm and researched how personal play memories influence and express themselves within the adult playful self. The research used creative methodologies to listen to, engage with and present back personal play histories, while attempting to document narrative and comment on the relationship between the individual adult and her inner playful child. The power of arts-therapies lies in its ability to be framed and facilitated in ways that increase self-reflection, serving the human need for validation and witnessing.

Whilst acknowledging its limitations, the research has provided various points of interest, from a deep description of playful listening to playful methods of representation and reflection. Drama Therapists together with other arts therapists can further research and/or practically implement and explore the proposed methodologies and creative forms of working to access new perspectives and potential growth to arts-based therapies.



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Appendices

Appendix A

Participant Information Sheet

Dear potential participant

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your interest in participating in this research project and if at any time you would like to withdraw yourself from the process, please do so. Let me introduce myself, my name is Yael Kersh and I am a Drama for Life student at the University of the Witwatersrand currently completing my Masters degree in Drama Therapy. This research project titled *Inner child, can we play: An ethnographic narrative enquiry of personal play histories.* Is an arts-based narrative study of adult women and their relationship to personal and childhood play.

The research will take on a creative methodology. This in essence means that the interviewing process and narratives provided by the participants will be the data, and then together with a written document will be analysed and presented in a creative representation. The data collection process will be conducted through individual interviews which will take place in a time and place most suitable for you. If given consent I will audio record these interactions. The participant will be given the option to participate by merely narrating her story in an hour long interview, or share in the creative process which would entail another two hour interaction's. Either way the information shared will be kept confidential and represented by pseudonyms in the final presentation.

All data collected will assist toward the completion of my Drama Therapy Master's thesis and not be used for any other subsequent endeavour. Furthermore, the data will work towards the validity of my research topic and to assist future researchers in Drama Therapy studies as well as creative arts-based research projects.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my research supervisor.

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Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

Dear Potential participant

For the purpose of ethical considerations, formal consent must be obtained from you to participate in this Masters Research project titled *Inner child, can we play: an ethnographic narrative enquiry of personal play histories.*

Please provide the following information regarding your consent for this research.

Please indicate your preference for use of identity

- ☐ I would like to use my own identity throughout the research process
- ☐ I would like to use my own identity for the interview stage of the research process and remain anonymous for the creative outcome
- ☐ I would like to remain anonymous throughout the research process

Please note that anonymity can only be guaranteed outside the research group as the final presentation will be a single presentation presented to all participants and followed by a group discussion.

Please indicate consent in terms of data collection

- ☐ I give consent to forms of creative interactions (such as drawing or drama)
- ☐ I give consent to audio recording
- ☐ I do not give consent to either of the above

I _____ have read and understand the terms of this research (as provided in the Participant Information Form) and agree to participate in the research. I understand the terms and conditions for the use of all data collected and based on the information provided on this form give Yael Kersh permission to make use of the data respectively.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my research supervisor.

Appendix C

Initial Interviews

Interview One Participant A

Q: What is play?

A: Sho, ummm… working with kids for the past five years, this is the sixth one. I realised that it's it's… most people they say play is for kids, play is for everyone. Because, I realised that every time when I play I become, I go into a certain world, a world that, I don't know whether as adults we are afraid of that world maybe we think that world is not suitable for us or you know? But it's it's a very relaxing world. It's a world where you just become yourself and you just whatever comes to mind you just do it. The whole body goes into that world. So for me play is not for kids play is for everyone. It's just, I don't know how I can put it, but I think maybe ya. Umm… Sho… yo… It's a space… how can I put this. It's a space of… exchange… and… its space of exchange where one meditates on a level understood by kids. Because we think we are better than play right? Like adults when they look at play they like ah the kids must go and play wada wada… but… it's… you meditate. You meditate in play. Let me make an example. If I… let's say like now… I'm so stressed, I've been telling you… there's this, there's this, there's that, I'm like oh my goodness what am I going to do? It's so frustrating. The kids will come… and I'll be like guys let's start rehearsal… then we start playing. I completely completely forget about everything. When I come out from that rehearsal space I'm smiling, I'm jumping, you know, I'm open, I'm totally different from when I walked into that space. So it's a space of change. Ye

Q: So… there's this man his name is Stuart Brown and he has this idea that he terms 'person play histories' which is basically our individual relationship to play, my relationship to play, your relationship to play – everyone's individual relationship to play. So… when we started talking and I just mentioned the word play I noticed that you just smiled. It brought simple joy to you… as far as I saw. So I'm wondering if you could think back to your favourite memory of play.

A: Umm. It's when we used to… umm… let's see…Yo I played a lot… I played a lot. It's so hard to pick up one and be like... Do you know what… what I remember about myself is the fact that I never liked playing, let's say… okay obviously with my siblings and stuff like that, we played, but it felt like I..I wanted to go, come out of home and go and play outside with other kids. Like I always wanted to go out and like every time when we had to… when we had to visit somewhere and yo… in your mind you start thinking… and when we get there we usually play hide and seek like this. You know… every environment, every space you go to there's a different way obviously you going to play. There's open environments there's closed environments. So you know that there's a specific type of playing that is going to be happening. So you are aware… I can't wait to play with my cousin this… I can't wait to do this… da da da da da. But… I played a lot of hide and seek. I think we loved a lot of hide and seek. And we used to play something called intsuma, so it's like… it's marbles… so what happens is… we have marbles… we all have marbles… oh my goodness… we used to… we used to even keep

pocket money to buy them… like if you had a lot of marbles you felt like a hero… and there were the ones that were like creamy with colours, and there were ones that were obviously like the marbles that you know. There were bigger ones, there were smaller ones, and you know there were different types of marbles. When you play that marble, you play on the sand right…you play… and you have to get closer to a marble, once I hit your marble, I take your marble. So you have to start again. There's a starting line and da da da da da. You have to start and again and throw it somewhere… so it's about hitting the… so there were… so we had… so we had certain styles as well… when you hit it like this… and it goes up and goes faster to the other side. You know and I don't understand because it's such a competitive game but we loved it, because you had to have a lot of marbles… so that Oh my god you can play. And… cause obviously it's more of a male game, my brothers used to have, my cousins used to have lots of marbles… and sometimes your marbles get lost… it becomes… you cry… you just have to have your marbles with you… when you go visit your cousin, they have to be there. And… there were a lot of indigenous games that we played. There was one where… I forgot the name of the game but you have like… I think its twelve holes on the ground and then you put like the marbles inside… and then it's about taking three and putting da da da da da da… and taking another three and… da da da da da… and when you reach a space where there is nothing, and you've got one left, or you don't have anything, then you can't play, then the other person on the other side, will play as well until all these marbles have to be in one, then you've won. There were other things… yo. We played a lot of indigenous games… a lot of indigenous games… which I think I really loved and learnt from them, a lot. Ya

Q: So… if you can think back to a story, a story of you playing. One of those games, or a different game, it could be anything.

A: I remember this one time… we had a cousin she was so good at everything. Like she was able to play, skipping rope, she was flexible, she was just everything, you want to play, and you want to play, ball, throwing ball. Everything she was able to play, so we all wanted her in our group, so you try by all means… it was such a stupid thing… but you try by all means that I'm forever next to you. It's this kind of people that when you look at their families, their mother is still young, it's a vibrant family, and you always look at them like ahh… and you always wanted her to be next to you. And I think I learnt a lesson about the thing… that we are all good in our own way, you know, and the more we looked at her, we couldn't craft ourselves. So we focused on her we thought oh she's good, and we doubted ourselves obviously. I think that's one lesson… and another…. Yo…

What did we play? Oh my goodness...

You know I grew up in a very… I didn't grow up in town. My parents, my mom stayed in town and my dad stayed in town so I stayed with my grandmother back on the farms. So all our games… it was like from the time you were done with your chores… its playing until… From the time you just go out of the gate and you go to school, its playing on the road, you're throwing stones, playing with grass, there certain things were you make things out of grass, you make bracelets out of grass, and then you put them here… you… you make necklaces, it was a form of some sort of play. There's this thing they called istatata. So you have to find a flat stone, like it has to be small and… and you throw it has to go like this ta ta ta ta… on the water… sometimes we used to play it also on the ground but it wasn't as good as the water. You sit there… I remember this one time me and my cousin… we… we went to a river nearby home and then we started playing this thing tatatatatata it was a Saturday

tatatata and then after that we said no. At home they didn't want us to swim in the river, my grandfather was like you must never swim there. Other kids started coming and they were swimming and we were like we want to swim there, we want to swim… we started putting feet and… (Naughty laugh)… let's just swim, they won't see us. We went inside we swam, we swam, we swam, we swam. I don't know how we swam in that river. My grandmother used to come with a bus, so it's like a bus that you know at this time it passes at five it passes and then she came with that bus, and then we were still swimming with the other kids in the river. We stayed far from that river; we were swimming and swimming and swimming and my grandmother reached home, we were still not, it starting to get dark, we were like… shucks… we are late and then we get dressed. We had, there's something we used to do so that they cannot hit you at home, if you know nguti you've done something. You take a stone, a small stone and you put it here and you put it here (showing lips) Such a myth, I also don't understand it. When you grow up I'm like how will the stone protect you from anyone? We put the stone and we were like ya… They won't do anything to us. Then we walked… Yo… my cousin, my older cousin came. He ran after us. He was hitting us on the back. Run home. My grandfather when we reached home he was like 'who said you must go to that river?' but we were enjoying playing with the water. They just didn't understand that we wanted to play cause we never experience it. They always say 'never go to the river… you'll get sick da da da da' but we wanted to go there.

So… ya… and we used to play, like when it's raining, if you're not going to school, you walk, you walk on the road, cause its gravel, and there's a lot of water ponds happening there. You play with the water. I remember me and my brother we were very very young, I'm sure we were about… my brother is very naughty, so he would make me do a lot of naughty stuff. So, I remember when we were young this other time, we went, I think we were round about five-six years old. I remember it cause my mom told me that this happened, I was like oh ya you're right actually… I see it very very… its not very vivid. So my brother, it was raining and he's like, the maid is not there, he was like we have to go outside and go and swim. I think on that weekend we had gone with the family somewhere to swim in like a resort sort of kind of thing. So my brother was still in that mind, like we have to go outside and swim. We went outside and we swam, and we were so muddy because its mud. It's in the road, we were so muddy. We came back and you know you come back you feel like I'm a hero, I'm a hero. And they were like 'Whaat?'' smack you, smack you, smack you. 'What were you doing?' 'Where were you going?' And I was like, oh my goodness he made me do something else again.

You know, at my grandmother's place ne, most of the people that were there, the neighbours. They used to go, to fetch fire wood, to fetch water… we had these old stoves were you put wood inside, but you have to buy the wood. So we didn't cook on the floor. We enjoyed seeing people doing this thing, I think for us it was some sort of playing or something. So we felt you know what, we can do this, we would go outside, we would go in the bush and try and pick some, pick some wood, and when you come back that thing is so heavy. Now you come dragging this whole thing, you are tired, and people used to go and wash, it's not a river very far, it's just a stream, that people used to go and wash there. And we take a wheel barrow we put our clothes inside on Saturday, we pretended, we got the muscles hey, we can do this. When you come back there's a steep like this… now the clothes are wet. You have to go up that steep with those clothes, my goodness. Yo… You then question yourself, why was I doing this thing? But we felt like you know what, we can do this. We have this. It's hereere, we can do this.

Sometimes I think there other things that we don't realise with kids, especially young kids that havnt learnt a lot of things, maybe like four or five years old. When they play with certain things that you do as an adult, it's not because they are just being naughty. Inside them there is something driving them, I can do this as well. You know, I can go there, take that wheel barrow and go up the hill. Forgetting that hey, you need muscle to do that, you know. So ya… It's like a child, when a child is putting their finger on fire, like this on a candle like this, and they burn. You know, they see you, sometimes people, they normally when they switch off the fire they do this thing (action). So the child is trying to figure out what is that you do when you do that? You know.

Q: If you could draw play, what would you draw?

A: (While drawing) there's a game called Shumpu, so Shumpu, its ball, its playing with the ball. They call it die or Shumpu. So what it is is you make a ball out of plastics. You take newspaper and you make it wet, it mustn't be too wet cause it's going to be very sore. Then, you put a plastic on top of it to make it like round and tie it very well, and then you start playing and hitting each other with the ball. Once it hits you, you are out. So I was a master of that one, I just knew that I could do this. I was just a master of that one. Like you have different styles, it is like you're dancing, you even fly on the air. When the ball is trying to hit you, you fly. Ye I was a master of that one. I just knew how to play it. I played a lot of games… and I'm glad that I played a lot. When I see kids around Hilbrow and the fact that, they don't really have the space to play so much, you know, and playing is needed for a child. It's just, even for an adult as well, I realise now, but, for a child, you just need, you just got to play somehow, cause these things they teach you a lot of things. They teach you how to work as a group, how to fight, how to stand your ground, they teach you all of those things, you learn so so much. You learn a lot from it. You know. So… ya… I love playing a lot.

I love brown by the way, brown and green, refreshing colours, especially the green. it a refreshing colour for me. And pink is the girlie side of me. I'm a female hey.

Q: So if you had to give play a song what song what you give it?

A: 'Look at the mountains, look at the sea, take your time and just look around. Look at the mountains, look at the sea, take your time and just look around. Bega izindaba, bega imifula, tatiskati u'gigubegale. Bega izindaba, bega imifula, tatiskati u'gigubegale.

It's just colours I like; I just chose them and put them there. It feels like the purple moves and blends and becomes the brown and green.

Interview One Participant B

Q: What is play?

B: I don't know, it's being able to do whatever you want to do, in the most sincere ways enjoyable. So I would say it's a physical action that I would do, in terms of maybe getting that kind of satisfaction. So it's basically just actively being free and ya, enjoying yourself. So, play would be in a physical way for me mostly, mm… or imaginary. In terms of if I were to, I don't know, like when I'm being creative with my child, and telling him stories that I just made up, so it's a form of play for me.

Q: What kind of stories would you tell him?

B: Well… happy ending stories! So… there once was... Then a little story about maybe the lesson I want him to learn at that time, maybe if its sharing, you know there was this little kid named bob and bob never had any fiends and one day he went to school… my little son is going to school for the first time and he saw a lot of friends right and then when he got to school mm… he was like maybe he didn't, he learnt how to have a friend, he learnt how to enjoy a meal together, and share. He learnt how to draw, my youngest loves drawing. You could be colouring with your friend, and all of that. So it's like a way getting him interested in going into school, but also just having a little play thing with him. Me being like I am an author of some sort (laughter). Ya… an author or a producer of a… ya, a personal movie between me and my child

Q: So there's a man called Stuart Brown who speaks about play and questions whether we play in adulthood and play in the way that we did as we were children. In this imaginative way that you've just described

B: I would say, when I didn't have children, I would say, I played a lot differently. Because it was back in the days, you know, being a student, starting out to work, play was a lot different, like going out with your friends or… so I didn't have a lot of physical play. I don't go to gym, and all those other things, so I can't say ya I was being sporty somewhere. So… umm… I only noticed that I played more when I'm around children. Because it's sort of like a, it pushes you to be in their, you know, wave length, or whatever it is, cause you can't exactly be a parent or an older person around a child. So that's what I noticed, when I noticed that play becomes different when you're older and in a certain situation, like if you're a parent it's a different one compared to if you're single woman, or just newlywed or something. Cause when you're newlywed your play is probably, I don't know, the kind of other physical play (Laughter). So… ya… that's what I noticed, that my play is different and when you're with the child you become even more playful, in the innocent playful way, not the other one.

Q: So… would you associate… So you're kind of, if I'm hearing you correctly, you can correct me if I'm wrong. You're saying play exists throughout the life span.

B: It does

Q: You're saying it exists in different ways, but it does exist, and it has existed for you.

B: It does… it's also… I think it's part of the psyche of being… of, I would say, staying sane. Because as you grow there's a lot of a responsibility, there are a lot of things that walk in, and the only ways to release your stress is to actually give some kind of ummm… some kind of lightness to it. And that would be some kind of play. Other people would go out clubbing. That would be their play, other people would go to theatres and whatever. You know, watching something. I used to watch a lot of movies. When I was in varsity, let's say, that was my recreational thing. I don't do sports, I don't do drama and all those other things, but me watching movies was my thing. I would go to cinemas all the time, I was in Pretoria so there was this place called Sterant, and you could go in for a movie for ten bucks on a Tuesday, so it was half price. So on Tuesdays, no… so it was actually ten bucks but on Tuesday it was five rands. So I would go there the whole day, if I wasn't having any lectures, so even on any other day, you would go for ten bucks. So, for me, it was my kind of play. And… I enjoyed it so much, there wasn't a movie that I hadn't seen, boring or not, so ya, I was kind of like the

encyclopaedia, everybody wanted to know, what's this movie like? They'd ask me. But now growing up I'm watching Ben Tens and all those other ones… my movies are kind of like very minimal. Ya…

Q: So… If I had to ask you of a memory that you remember, when you were young, when you were a child. What's the first thing that would come to your mind in terms of play?

B: I would say, it was always that group play, I remember most of my group play when I was much younger. When I was small let's say primary school. We used to play a lot of… umm… skipping ropes, we would do a lot of hide and seek… and we would do this other game, I don't know what it's called but it's basically… somebody… it's sort of dodge ball… umm… but if you get hit by the ball then you're out. I think, and you have to. So that's the kind of play that I remember. I remember the pranks we used to play… umm… either on our parents or our helpers… umm I remember the spin the bottle when we were getting older and starting to explore sexuality and all of that. So basically I remember most of my group plays than the plays that I did by myself. Umm… so I think play is also quite a social thing. Umm… instead of a single personal thing, there's always an interaction between someone or something. So I think maybe when you remember, you remember those interactions that you had during that play, and it's always a good feeling.

So, I remember mostly the, good play. Umm… the bad play I usually put it back there and sort of forget about it. Unless if you really think about it, and then you're like, oh when was that other time when I felt umm… like, I wasn't liked, or you know, when you were isolated or something like that. When other kids didn't want to play with you, whatever it is.

Q: So if you could think of one story, if you could tell a story of your fondest story of you playing as a child, one story, what would that story be?

B: Wow… I should have been prepared for this one.

I remember, it's always been adrenaline rush, let's say when we're playing the dodge ball play cause it's one of those things where. We would be group of kids and somebody would be *it* a guy or the lady that has that ball and when you have those moments when you can actually dodge that ball its like so… it's that rush. You feel like oh my god I'm the *it*, you know what I mean. I think that is the moment I would remember the achievement of either being the last one to be hit by the ball or the last one left, which means you're the king you know. Umm… so I remember that, when I've actually been the one that won the game. It's a great feeling, you can't take that away, there were no trophies, but there were bragging rights.

Q: Where did you play this?

B: Umm… it was in the street. Cause we used to live in Alex so… in Eastbank which is like the quieter side of Alex, and, our streets were very quiet so… there weren't really taxi's going through it or anything like that. So… we would have sections where we would play between my house… and all of the kids from the street would be friends. You know, we would go to the next street and the other people will be our rival friends so when they come over and it's our team against theirs… it was a wonderful thing, so, ya, playing out in the street, and the freedom. We would have a tennis ball, usually, because that's the, well, there's also… if somebody really wants to hit you with force, it be very painful. If somebody doesn't like you, it's not like no… it has to be with force. So that you can actually say ah-ha you can't catch me kind of thing. Um… but… so … when you didn't like someone

and you'd playing that, it would be your chance to be revengeful… and just say, take that for what you said to me yesterday. That kind of thing… but it was innocent play… um… wonderful, I must say. Or when we were doing the skipping rope which, it's sort of like like jump rope, you know the American jump rope, but they have like the double Dutch – the two in one. We have the single one where you would make different like dance moves and whatever as you jump and all of that, and then whoever is around it would be like a competition between the two or between the four or whatever and whoever is actually the winner is also the king. So play during that was also about… it was sort of like a sport more than anything. Very physical, it gave you that adrenaline rush; it gave you the good hormone, dopamine, so it gave you that. That rush where you actually have that good feeling. Whether you were sad your mom had beaten you up the day before or on that day in the morning because you didn't wash the dishes or whatever. When you go down to the playground it's like all of that's forgotten, this is it, this is my highlight. This is life. You can't take it too seriously. You cry, you laugh, but mostly you laugh.

I even notice it with my son because, you know, I'd shout at him one moment and he's like ah mommy, I'm sorry mommy, and be sad, and two minutes later he's like all over me trying to get me to tickle him or other things, and forgotten, because we are playing now, that negative part or emotion is over-clouded, wiped off, literally.

Q: Are there any other memories that come to mind, when you think of play?

B: Other memories would be my sporting… not career… my sporting activities at school. I was very sporty in primary school. So I did every single sport. I did tennis, I did, umm… we had baseball, I did track and running. I tried everything. I think on the athletics side of the sport, cause they were always like in different seasons, I think I tried to jump, long jump and all of those things but I was short, so I was always coming short. But it was good, just trying to do that and most of the time its also probably having the teacher, you know, cheering you on, encouraging you. It was one of those things that built your esteem, your self-esteem a bit. Umm… and made you comfortable in your own skin. I was an awkward skinny kid, so… (Laughter)… I didn't mind it in primary school, I minded in High school, cause everybody was like ah you just so skinny, everybody else had boobs and everything, I was a late bloomer in everything. So it kind of like made me sadder, but, I was great on track. So I could run very well, I could play netball because I was very fast. Until I got injured, that wasn't fun. Other than that, that would be my sports at school.

Other plays I remember would be when I go back to my mom's home, where she comes from, from the village. We had different types of play there, cause we would play with like, I don't know what they call it, but we called it like Diketo, where you'd actually take a stone, throw it up and take out some other stones and then put back, it's sort of like a counting game. You put back, you throw it up again… There is an English word for it… so that would be one of those… it's also like a… what do you call it… a competition kind of thing. You had to play it with somebody else, but you could also play it by yourself, as practice. So… you would have different coloured stones, sometimes, and you have to take out a certain stone, like the white stone, the gold one, or the whatever. So it's pretty tricky when you have a whole circle filled with a lot of them and you have to actually be in such a way that you put the rest of them, it's a tricky one. You have to put the rest of them back into that circle, and take out the one that you have to take out.

Small stones… around… you know how you go to like a river or whatever, you find different types of stones, right? So that would have certain different textures to them, so there would be the normal like gravel ones, you would have white ones… sort of like the one's in the gardens, you know, the pebble stones or whatever and you'd have some blackish stones, and then you'd have the normal ones. So basically what you do is… it's sort of like… it's a make-up kind of game. So you make the rules up, so if you going to have ten white stones and fifteen black ones or whatever it is. And you have to take out the white stones one by one. So you take out a group of them and you can't take out one, you have to take out a group four, five, or above, and you have to return back the other ones and take out that one. Sort of like a chess game. You know when you're playing a chess game and you take out the different opponents chess whatever. So you keep it… as you go on it gets lesser and lesser and lesser and then until you have one or whatever. When you done with them, you done you're the winner… ill make an example for you… later.

Our kids these days don't play such, their plays are play station and… So I never had a play station, I had a bicycle. I loved that umm… I think I was also one of the best riders in my neighbourhood… umm like I said I tried everything. I had roller blades, I fell once and I couldn't, so that's the kind of play I didn't want to go through, I'm gonna get scars and everything, na, no, I don't want that one. So, ya, umm. What else. When I was younger there were a lot of different types of play that we would play, And the fact that I was so easy to learn a new thing, new thing was actually wonderful. The more we played one game, the more we wanted to change it a little bit. It was creative also

So growing up, things changed, you know, when you grow up you get a lot of filters, like girls can't do this. You can't be this loud, you have to wear skirts and not pants in certain places like going to church. There are a lot of filters that go about that makes sure that we lose some of our play, because you're older now, you're a teenager, you can't be seen playing that, you know. You move on to different types of play… but lesser. I would say, as you grow up. Until you have babies, then you go back to everything. You want to teach them every single play that you know… So it's like a cycle.

I would say, I like playing, I miss actually playing, or where I used to be the main character in the play. Now I'm like secondary, I'm like the teacher, you know, the supervisor, the sports coach. I'm like the coach now and it's not as fun as being the actual player, most of the time. But with me and my husband, we do a lot of play, chase each other whatever, every now and then, lighten up the whole space. Go cycling, jogging. Although he's a faster runner than I am, I think, I used to be a fast runner, now I'm like very slow, cause I'm very unfit. But, other than that, we enjoy each other's company, we play in a different way, but, to each other we're sort of like get that inner child. To the two of us we can do anything but around friends and family and colleagues we have to fold your legs a certain way, you can't say this, you can't say that, you know. That's why I'm saying as an adult you get filtered a lot.

Interview One Participant C

Q: What is play for you?

C: if you say play, the first thing that comes to my head is acting. It's what I think of. I hear play, I see acting.

Q: What type of acting?

C: Any, just presenting something basically. The final something, presenting something, that's what I see.

Q: If I ask you if you play, do you play?

C: Do I play? Yes I do. I talk a lot, I like talking. So… I narrate; maybe it's from where I'm from, we make sounds to narrate things. So it's like, I can say something to one of my sisters without even saying it in English, without even saying it with words, but I can make a sound, she knows what I'm saying. I can do this and she knows what I'm saying, so it's like, it's an integral part of, also Nigerians we're used to acting things, performing things, basically. So that's play for me.

Q: So there's this man named Stuart Brown and he talks about this idea of adult and their play. He terms this relationship 'personal play histories' and basically what he does is he asks his audience to think of their most memorable memory of play. So… I'm going to ask you to think of that.

C: Okay… I grew up with a big family, we had thirteen kids. I can remember us sitting down, altogether, talking, we do it a lot. All thirteen, we went to different schools, we went to boarding houses, secondary schools. So everybody came home and brought their own thing. You know, you are talking about your friend, you are talking about this, you're talking about that. That's, that's for me is my most memorable time, when we were growing up. Everybody had different discussions, everybody had different jists, and that's what I can remember, sitting with them when we were young. Some of them a lot older than I, I'm towards the end. So everybody just brought their own different things and they acted it out, we played, we talked about it, that's the fun I had. Not like, we used to be outside but not the normal play, that kind of play, but just with sisters and brothers. All sitting and acting, basically. Maybe telling a story, there'd be telling different stories. Not the traditional stories, maybe school stories, hostel stories, that's what we were talking about then. It used to be fun.

Q: You say you played outside…

C: Yes we did, the phones weren't there then, there weren't phones, the TV's were minimal, the channels were little, there were like six channels. When I was growing up the channels used to start by five in the evening. So you had to find something to do till five. So we had games. We had this one, these square things; can I call it in my language? We had one we used to call Suwe, I've seen it here. You drew like six squares and then we used to jump in it, I've seen it on films. I think they do it here or they do it in America. You know, you jump on it, you count. Then we used to do the skipping things. We had lots of games on the outside, there was this one, hide and seek, you know, old man's bluff, and a whole lot of other games like that. But no TV's, no phones, no tablets, no games like that. So we were more outside. The skipping the jumping the chasing, it was fun (Rubbing her hands, smiling). That's what we used to do, that was our kind of play then.

Q: And those games, did you play them more with your siblings? Or with friends? Or both?

C: More with my siblings, remember we were thirteen, there really wasn't any use to go outside. We were thirteen. I'm from a polygamous home, so I had age mates. They were my father's kids but they were my age mates, my immediate other sister is three months older than I am, and I had a

younger one that was like two years young than I. so we were more into ourselves than outside. My father was on the strict side, he expected us to play with ourselves. So it was more ourselves, but I did play with friends. Like I said I went to boarding house and then we had time to play in school as well so we still did this kind of games. Ye, I went to secondary school 1989, so… we still had games in boarding house, so I did that with my friends as well. But when I was at home it was more with my sisters and brothers

Q: And what was your favourite, out of all of those?

C: Now I can't remember the name, I just know that you'd turn and say something and then everybody disappeared and then we picked something, we jumped on the squares, we used to jump on the squares, I know that you had to pick something and then jump on the squares. I can't remember, but it was fun, that particular game was fun. You did a bit of skipping, a bit of jumping up. You had everything in it so that's why I liked it. They'll tell you to do things. I didn't like the squares one because I didn't use to win it, so I really didn't like it, my sister, one of my sisters was so good, she was always winning. And we used to play Ludo as well, the dice game, and then we used to play with cards. We had check mate, did we have check mate in cards now? I think we did, we had something check. Go fishing, was it go fish. Go fishing go fish, see, it's been a while, (laughs) I don't remember. Go fishing or go fish, with the cards, yes, we used to play that. Then we used to play, there was this one that was foursomes, you could play twosomes or foursomes, we used to pick teams, with the cards. You and your team mate, had to, she had to like give you a signal, you needed to know what, I think you needed to have like the same kind of cards, four same. She had two cards, you had two cards. So you needed to signal yourself at the same time to drop it at the same time, ah I can remember that game, that was fun, but that was an indoor game.

Q: What word would you give play, if you had to give it a word?

C: Fun, Happiness, joy, that's what is brings to mind, you know. If you are sad then you really don't play, so if you're playing, you are really happy, it makes you happy. Fun, airy, you know, everything nice, funny, play… everything nice.

Q: So you have gone from telling me that for you play is drama, and performance and now we're talking about games. So… it seem like they both represent your play and how you understand play. So if you had to say that you play as an adult? You would still say that you play as an adult?

C: Mm… I do play as an adult. But there does. Ah, adult play feels different hey (laughter). Ye, I do, I do, I still do play as an adult. Like the fun part, like the part I was saying, like with my sisters, we still do the acting out, we still do the jesting, we still do the describing things with sound, those ones are still constant. Then I play with my husband, but in a different way…. ye… in a different way entirely. Ye, play's still there. Not as much as there as when I was a child, now comes to think of it. We need to find time to play.

Q: If you had to give play a song, what song would you give it?

C: I don't know, because I don't think in songs, my voice is very bad. A sound would be a scream, if I'd give play a sound I would scream(high pitch scream). Something like that. I wouldn't really thing about a song, I really don't sing. So maybe that's why I don't think in songs. Growing up I knew my voice wasn't so good, so I never sing.

Q: That's fine… and a colour, what colour would you give it.

C: Bright blue, anything sunny, like you know, really, really sunny, you know those golden sunny days, anything airy, shiny, bright. Bright blue

Q: Those memories that you shared, about your childhood, the thirteen children, everybody coming around and talking and telling their stories and then going outside and playing those games. Where does that take place?

C: At home, in Nigeria. Lagos. We lived in Lagos, we lived together, all thirteen of us. It was just that we went to schools and then we came back, so we were living together. It's home, I still call that place home. Although I have moved away from it a long time ago.

Q: That's where your play memory sits?

C: More there than anywhere else. They are a bit more scattered all through my life, as in, secondary school, university days, I did have play, but if I think first, I'll think to those one's before I go anywhere else because those one's form a major part of my life. For me… I'd think to those ones. I did have, like I said I went to boarding house and I did have fun there, I played there, I can remember my friends, but if I'm thinking first and foremost I'll think of those ones before I go anywhere else.

Q: And are those your happiest, your brightest blue?

C: I would still take my childhood, those times. All the other times have other things connected to it so they are not as much fun. University days, I had fun, I had play, you know, but then other things, I was older so other things they are connected to that play, so it's not so bright. But my childhood I must admit it was just the play, the fun, just pure joy, that time. Later times, a lot of heartache and some other things mixed with the joy.

Interview One Participant D

Q: What is play for you, when I say the word play what comes to mind?

D: Okay, play… Play for me, its… letting go, being free. Ahh… doing things differently, like things you never think you will do. Exploring different things, and just letting go, and be happy, happiness, just being free and you know… for me that's play, letting go.

Q: And do you think adults play?

D: No, adults don't play. I play alone, sometimes even at home I try to play with my family cause we sing crazily, we do crazy things, just many things you know. Cause it comes naturally to me to just do that and no on tops me and they allow me at home. Now they're getting it and they're doing it with me now so it's like, ye, this is my space to be free and then I do it. But when I'm around other people I contain myself like everyone. Even if, even if when I feel like, I wish I could do this here cause I feel the space allows me, but I hold because the environment doesn't say do it, or, the people that I am around you can see they're conservation so it's like they will say I'm crazy, so I just hold, I hold myself. Cause I like to be free most of the time.

Q: So I can hear you say free a lot, so you associate play with a sense of freedom?

D: Yes, yes, yes, yes. Letting go, for me that's play

Q: So there is this man, his name is Stuart Brown and he speaks about 'personal play histories'. He says that each of us has a relationship to play, a personal relationship to play. So he asks his audience to go back and to think of their fondest memory of play, and so I'm going to ask you to think of your fondest memory of play.

D: To tell you the truth. The memory that I have was when I was touring. Cause we were doing a street theatre performance and we were letting go. We threw out, from the first part; we were doing one hour show. So it was fun, it was like energetic, so we were just letting go for that hour. So for me it was just like, ohh yes, I did it. I'm free now. So after that performance, I was going to be happy, smile, laugh, I didn't want even to be angry because there was no point for me to be angry cause all that one hour I was on stage, I was like, letting go, being free and being happy (laughter). So for me that was the memory I have. And with you asking this question. I never thought it like, cause for me it was like, yes, I went overseas, it was nice. It's nice to be in Europe, but I never realised even as I'm speaking to you that, that one hour that I was performing, just letting everything out was making me the happiest person ever.

Q: So… can you think of like a moment or one particular moment in Europe, so you can say where it was and what was the performance. Try and describe it, however you can.

D: So… The first show we did it in Belgium, and, what we were doing, we were singing, we were dancing which is, that's normally what we do. But there we were doing some funny actions, grabbing people on the stage dancing with them, and then crying, laughing, making jokes to people, going around. So it was like we were not thinking too much of anything we were just being in the space of making people happy at that moment. So it was like yes now, I'm going to make people to laugh, I'm going to people to see me, to think of me and its exciting cause after the show people they get so happy, they want to hug, they want photos, it's like you see I did it. So for me I was being free and letting go, people are being happy. So, the moment was the first show we did in Belgium, cause it was nerve racking cause it was street theatre, first time, we're not sure people would like it or not and then they were so in it. It was like yes, yes, yes, yes, yes we achieved something that I wanted to achieve, making people happy (laughter).

Q: I can just see what joy it brings to your face when you talk about it. Your whole body is just like elated. Bigger than the world

D: Ye, it was amazing

Q: Did it have like a story line?

D: It did have a story line, but, it was about the prince living in the village, but what happens in the village is, it's something that it's out of the world. We were not doing the normal things that you would think in the village. So we were dancing, telling the story that the prince appreciated to be the prince, but there was this thing happening, there was this thing happening, there was this thing. So, it was something that was fragmented in different ways, ya. It was not like from here to there, no, we had pieces, pieces, pieces but mixed in one. Ya… ya

Q: How old were you when you relate to that memory?

D: I was… was 2000… I was… 99' I was doing matric, so I was… 19. My first tour I was 19, ya. I was 19 (smiling).

Q: And if you can think even earlier than that… when you think of play. What comes to mind?

D: I think by then… cause truly speaking I don't remember much of my childhood, because for me… I felt I wasn't the normal child at some point… I felt… cause I didn't understand everything that was happening, and there was no one showing me that this is happening… so I had to catch up things by myself and I think I was slow in even catching up things by myself. So, even when I was happy I wasn't aware that I'm happy, when I was sad, I wasn't aware. So many things were like… whats… what is really happening? Cause I didn't really understand my growing up what was happening, until I grow, and, I was like oh… this is this… this is this, you see. And now I'm old, I can, it's now the time that I start to put the puzzle together. So my childhood I don't remember much of the excitement that I had, I know I went to school, I had friends, but being, playing… yes I was playing with other kids cause we had to play, but for me to say, ye I remember this moment and we were doing this, we were playing… naa… when I was very young, nine ten… na… I didn't understand most of the things what was happening.

Q: You say you did play with children more because you were supposed to play and you were a child… So when you think of that, you can't remember even what games you played?

D: No I do remember the games…

Q: You do remember…

D: Ye… I do… we played, we called it Ibhathi. So we had a tennis ball. So maybe it's a group here (drawing) maybe we are ten, its five five, or let's say four four… and then we had a ball, a tennis ball. And then we will have tins. So… the challenge was with the tins. So we'll have the ball and we would choose four this side, and these ones, the first one, would have to hit this four so that they can't do the tins… So if maybe they hit me, I duck, I run and do the tins, the other four will come and help, then we'll say Shigago, we jump the tins and we run to the circle and there be a square here. If all the four of us are in the square, we take that ball and we had to hit the tins cause they are, and if you make them fall, they have to make sure that, because we won we have to make the tins to fall. But if the four of us will miss all the tins, now it is their turn. So it's us to now make sure that we hit them with the ball before they get into the square… I don't know if I am explaining well.

It's one team at the time, so the first four will just, will have the ball, so that when they have the ball they need to make sure they, eish, when they have to throw to the other team, then if the ball catches me, Im out… three its left… but if I duck and the ball doesn't catch me, I run with my team to make these tins, to pile them up. Then we just do the Shigago, we make sure we jump the tins, we run fast to the square, cause they having a ball… they will keep on… they will keep on… and we will keep on making sure… ya… or maybe if they hit all the four of us, we're all out, it is their turn. But if it doesn't, maybe one person is left; we come to the square and try to hit the tins. If he hits the tins then all of us will run and say heeei heeei, cause we're starting from the scratch, but if this one misses the tins, then it is their turn to make the tins… ye… ye.

Q: Very cool… and what age do you remember…

D: We were young… maybe we were… ya… thirteen, fourteen. Cause we were a bit grown up, thirteen, fourteen we were playing it a lot. And then when we were ten, nine, we were doing the… do like I do I do I do… those games… morabe rabe goo… we were doing all those games when we were young… ke kotande yo (singing). We were doing all those ones. And we have Umgusha foot, the one you take a pantyhose, you cut the pantyhose and then one stands that side one stands this side with the pantyhose, and then you come inside the pantyhose, we go out, we do a fish, we go to the that side. We do one, two three, we come this side and so (showing) it starts here (ankles) it goes here (knees) with the pantyhose, it goes there (bum) it goes there (underarms) it goes there (neck). If we jumping very well it goes up

Q: And you made that out of pantyhose, how did you do that?

D: With a razor, so, you cut… you start with the scissor, you cut pieces (displaying) and then you take a razor, we cut, we cut, we cut, and then we do the knots, we do the knots until we get the whole. So with the razor sometimes we were holding the leg, like this, long, and then we cut in in between ch ch ch ch, we cut, and then that's a strip, and then we take another leg ch ch ch ch, then that's a strip, we take the side ch ch ch… So we saw that we could have the longest one. Then we tie the knots… ye... It was nice playing those games, ya, it was brilliant. It was, it was nice. Cause we were waking up to say Ahyi, let's go and play this and everybody Yai Ya Ya Yia, let's do it, let's do it. So it was very nice… ya

Q: When did you play them? Like before school, after school, during school?

D: Holidays, after school, not before school. It was most holidays when it was holidays, school holidays and ye after school, ya. You know after school and weekends when you know that you're not going to school. Saturday after cleaning and doing everything… let's go play… you know we used to play in the morning maybe around nine or ten then you know by one we done playing because we chilling and talking so we had the time. After two o'clock ai we don't play anymore na… ya. It was interesting.

Q: Thank you… Okay so now I'm going to give you a piece of paper and I'm going to ask you to draw play. However you imagine it… However you want. Here are some colours… you can use whatever… and while you are drawing you can talk, you don't have to.

D: I'm not a good drawer hey

Q: No, you don't have to be… just draw whatever is in your mind

D: So whatever is on my mind?

Q: What ever is on your mind

D: I'm doing whatever is in my mind hey.

(After a few minutes of drawing)

D: For me it's like… colours. I love play it's nice to play. It's amazing (moments later) I think I'm done… vibration going everywhere… pshu… let's just goo man… (Laughter) ya

Q: Very cool, thank you. If you had to give play a song, what song would you give it?

D: Yo… from like eh… from the songs you know? Or

Q: Any song that comes to your mind, I don't have to know it, it can be a song your great great grandmother sung to you or it can be a song you made up or whatever

D: Okay… I got joy in my heart (Singing) I got joy in my heart, and you know it's the kind of feeling, followed by a sense of healing. Yeah, I got joy in my heart… I got love in my heart… ye that's what I'd sing (Laughter)

Q: Nice. Thank you… Umm thank you so much… I there anything you'd want to end off with, anything you want to say, anything you want me to know about

D: No… it's just that you made me realise something I was never thinking of and its fun. Cause it's like… its rejuvenating cause for me as I said play is just being free and realising that I do it at home… umm it makes me feel good ya… ye

Q: Good I'm glad.

D: Cause, I was nervous I was like eish I hope she won't ask me things that are difficult to answer or make me feel uncomfortable.

Q: That's the amazing thing about this, is that everyone is … everyone knows how to play, we all know. Some of us we were stopped very early in life, some of us have been playing all our lives, we don't know how not to play

D: True… true… and so other people see you and the see you playing they're like I get you, others they don't get you.

Q: Ye… It's just interesting cause everyone is so nervous… don't ask me things I don't know. But, everyone knows… we all know… in our own ways… but we all know… I am very grateful, thank you very much

Interview One Participant E

Q: So the first question I'd like to ask you is… what is play?

E: Having fun… umm… being spontaneous… play is playing (laughter)… Oh it's so difficult… uh… what is play? Doing stuff that makes us happy, that makes us laugh, that, that distracts us… um… so you doing stuff that you might be feeling, and while you doing it you feeling kind of, this is fun, oh look let's do this, and so you're feeling like ohh, that, that… as you doing it ideas are coming. So… so as you playing like, like… especially when you see like children, they playing in the mud or whatever and they've got their little trucks or whatever it is… ooo no no let's put a road here, oh… let's use these sticks for the bridge… and… and it's almost like… it like builds and it like… So it's something, something an activity that almost builds, you know builds up as it goes as well. And if you consider

just like playing around with a friend and then you chase and then you stop and then you, so it's an activity that is… ya… allowing for creativity and building as, upon itself as it, as it goes along. Ya (chuckles)

Q: And with that definition in mind, you mentioned a lot, I mean you mentioned play and fun and spontaneity and this idea of building on and change and creativity… and… do you play?

E: Mmm… not enough… hehe… you see its funny with me cause I think that I'm very playful when I'm like… like now you've come to visit me and… and… okay let's put it on a third person. So if someone comes to visit me um… and I'm excited cause they're there and ooh come and see this and I want to show you that, can you help me with this and that's not playing necessarily but I feel playful because I'm with someone and I'm interacting and then we laugh and it's like oh ye and then you add to the conversation. So in a sense I feel like, I feel like like I am playful in that sense, in my interactions I'm quite playful… And so I think that sometimes that's… what people pick up on in me and… and, because I don't come across as serious in interaction I come across as playful so its actually interesting for me to consider that, that, what is it about myself that, that is doing that. And I think it is because I am responding to the interaction the same way that I was describing, that play generates more interactions amongst us if we play with each other, so it's interesting. So then but… so if you had to think about… cause you asked me, do you play? Not formally, no. Um, I think in a way that I need to play more in that like, okay, let me make an arrangement to actually go bike riding with somebody, you know, through the mud and like whatever and just have fun of a Saturday. So that kind of thing, so in other words to actually, consciously build… I would say relaxation moments. So I mean I suppose you could question well okay is that still play. That's something that comes in there I suppose but like I think I consciously need to build more in in a way just so that one lightens up a bit in life, you know, for goodness sake, cause we all need to lighten up. Ya… so do I play… I… I'm still answering you I think, I think I'm still thinking about the answer.

Q: Well I mean just from my observation and what I'm hearing you say is that your definition of play was this idea of… this interaction that grows and builds and that's spontaneous and it's fun and its joy and then you mentioned that when people come you feel that spontaneity and the fun and the joy… so

E: So, clearly I play.

Q: That would sound like you do play

E: I guess it is built into drama and we have, by very nature of choosing that field in in our lives we've recognised the… the potential of having fun and being with people and interacting with people in a playful way… for further building connections between us. So I know for example by helping to run youth group at church I said look, I will do games. I will do the warming up, the getting to know each other through the type of drama games that I do, because I knew that that would help to relax the group, break the ice, you know… this kind of thing… warm them up like physically as well as just like… just relax them. So… ya… so… where as someone else would say well I can come to youth group and I will offer to give a talk, and that's the last thing I'd offer to do (laughter). I would rather offer to say no let me do something fun. To get people to… to access that part of themselves that allows them to have fun and drop boundaries really… so I think. I think that play helps us, it's probably a question that you are going to ask, but I think play helps us to… to release some of the

boundaries that we put around ourselves. And I would looooove just to get more people to actually do that, to say wohahahahaha let's have fun and you're having fun and you laugh and suddenly you're not, not holding yourself so far away from others.

Q: Do you think adults play?

E: Well this is the thing I mean, I mean, as I'm describing that I'm thinking oh I would just you just want to see more and more people you know… playing more. I don't think they play enough because if they are playing, we're not necessarily seeing it, maybe they play when they're making love, maybe they, you know, maybe they play when they're cooking and and being stupid 'no I told you not to put the onions there but now you putting the onions there' and then throw wet cloth at the friend or partner or I don't know… so there's moments of play but I think you're raising a very interesting thing of the extent to which we consciously play or not or you know and ya… It's interesting… Ya… there probably just isn't enough play… In the world… Sadly, a real sad thing is when if we consider how so many millions of children in the world are prevented from playing and that's one of the, I could honestly cry. One of the saddest things, I mean to think that children are working and they, they actually, it's so interesting that forced child labour, forced labour in India or whatever or um that they're actually involved in pushing around wheelbarrows and cement and bricks and mud, for real not for play. Ha! It's just like, its criminal… It's criminal cause I would suspect, I don't know, but would suspect that play helps developmental processes in children. Mmm… ya… sorry I'm kind of pre-empting some questions

Q: So ya… child's play… I'm gonna ask you something now… um… ya… there's this man, Stuart Brown and he speaks about play, and he speaks about adult play, and he helps people just explore this idea. He runs an organisation in North America called the National Institute of Play, I think that's what it's called. Anyway, he's got this concept which he calls our 'personal play histories' which as you would see is a part of my title and so what he's interested in is what our relationship to play is, and that's kind of why I started the whole conversation by asking what is play to you because I feel like play is quite different for various people as you also mentioned. So, he brings this idea of 'personal play histories' and he notes how we each have a very personal relationship with play, which he then continues with and says resonates with childhood and comes from our childhood and started in our childhood. And so he asks his audience to think of their fondest, earliest memory of play and so I'm going to ask you, when I say the word play to you and I ask you for your fondest, earliest memory of play, what would come to mind?

E: It's interesting, I think, cause I thought you might... So I already had started to think of that but… it's this thing of like… I have a very strong memory of playing on my own in our garden in Bulawayo in 'the then Rhodesia', in Zimbabwe and um… I wasn't that young I mean, you know, like I'm not remembering playing as a four year old or as a six year old, I think… I'm trying to think how old I was… So I might have been in standard three, which would have made me like maybe ten years old, which I think is quite late, but anyways, it's this very strong memory anyway so… Because I, I… It was playing on my own umm, whereby; I think I asked my parents to, asked the gardener to help me to build a house. And I remember very distinctly where it was, I don't know why it was actually towards the entrance to the property umm I don't know why we chose there because we had a big garden towards the back, I don't understand, but anyway, it was against a fence and I don't know what he used but that fence provided the back wall and then we obviously built up two walls coming out

from the fence, and I think, and I don't know where this grass came from, I think there was grass, like long grass, maybe he brought it from where he was living, I don't know, but we didn't have it in our garden. Or we used something else, that memory's not clear but we had this little house and I remember that was my little house and one of the things that I remember was um… collecting berries in the garden and I think there were little red berries and maybe some mud, and maybe there were leaves, they all constituted different little dishes or whatever for, I don't know, I don't know if I had a family in there, like an imaginative family or, but the thing that I remember is like the collecting and the putting and the, cause this was now a house and ya… funnily enough I don't remember if I had imaginary residence and friends and… I don't remember that, I don't remember creating those, but I remember that I was very busy collecting and… maybe I was mixing you know, the sand and… I don't know if I had little bowls or or, maybe I did ask for plastic bowls from the kitchen or something, I can't remember, that's one of, that's one of my earliest memories and… ya, I do, from that same era, from that same period, cause we were in Zimbabwe I think it was five years, standard one up to standard five, so one of the things that is actually quite strong and I'm not sure where it falls, probably around the same year umm was… with friends from school, was playing that elastic game where you have an elastic and two are holding the big elastic and you go in, out, in, on, in, out whatever ya, so and you put the elastic higher and higher, so that's quite a strong memory, and around the same time, I'm giving you more than one does it matter?

Q: Keep going…

E: So around the same time, around the same era umm we would go to Sunday school at the school, I, I asked my mother about this recently, I wasn't sure why we were going to Sunday school at our school and not in a church, and she said no at the church that they were attending there wasn't a very lively Sunday school, if there was any at all and she knew that the people who were running it at the school, it was a good program or whatever, anyway, I learnt we learnt a very long medley (singing) in my heart there rings a melody, there rings a melody of heavenly harmony, in my heart there rings a melody, there rings a melody of love… and it goes on and on this melody then it changes into all sorts of different songs, you know how medley's work. So I remember, I don't know how many of us, maybe… two of us, me and Sarah, maybe others but we then created a whole dance to that medley, I can't remember the dance well, I can't remember the dance but I think we just did the whole thing wish I could choreograph as well as that now or as fast as that now so there was a bit of choreography and then also with Sarah um… whom I lived with for four months cause my parents went overseas umm and then I think I might have been around at least eleven but they had a swimming pool and there was deep imaginative stuff going on in that swimming pool of different worlds and stuff like that and in fact there more memories then I thought… Ya, Ya… So we were playing, I wrote something once and I think I still have it, I don't know where it is but I think it was for the school magazine and it related to that imaginative world in the swimming pool, you know of… underworlds and… not sure exactly what it was about, and also things like my marco polo. Oh my word marco polo in the swimming pool for long time, which I don't think I particularly liked… I didn't like games where you had to run away and be caught and hide and, I think I felt threatened, ya, and I think I preferred playing with less people than playing with lots of children, even it's the same now, I don't like parties, I'd rather talk to you on your own.

Q: Wow… Thank you… If you had to say which one of those memories that you mentioned, I know, I know you said them in a specific order, which one really was your favourite, now that you look back

and you like oh actually I remember that happened… or is there another moment that you're like oh actually that also happened…

E: I don't know why I think that little house… I just think… ya… that's very interesting actually… it makes me want to cry (deep breathing) ya (beginning to cry). I don't know because I feel like… if that is my favourite memory I feel a little bit sad in a way because, because like now I'm struggling with the idea of living alone and yet if that's a good memory shouldn't that strengthen me… do you know what I mean… So I don't know…it's like… I was happy… I was happy in the garden and searching and putting and mixing and yet now I'm like, like, I don't want to do that alone (deep breath). I don't know I'm just… I think I'm crying because of the irony in that it made me happy then, why can't I be happy now.

I just find it interesting that that memory does you know spark the tears because I mean obviously our memories are related to now as well, but we don't realise that because we think they're memories therefore they're in a certain box, and now you are asking us to take that box out, but I'm like… Am I sad… I'm asking myself was I playing alone in my garden because actually I didn't have friends, I can't remember, or maybe my friends were busy or, that, that friend that I mentioned in terms of where I swam in her pool and maybe she and I were the ones who made the dance, she and I went to ballet at least twice a week um… and her mom wasn't working and um, so her mom would take us both to ballet and wait for us or whatever and pick us up, I remember, I remember very clearly a lot of times directly after ballet we would go to the garage and we would get chocolate logs and I think coke which I mean is a lot of sugar. It was like the most divine thing after ballet, but I don't know, but I don't know… I wonder if there is like process in me, that actually keeps people away and that's why I don't find someone to share my life with because… we played nicely Sarah and I, and clearly, I remember there were two Jewish girls umm… Pessach and… and I remember we played sometimes with them, me, Sarah and those two, but I don't know there were some tensions, too many girls, you know what it can be like… So I don't know what happened so I'm thinking, why was I playing alone in my garden, and like is it related to now like to me now. Ya… anyway that's my own analysis or lack of analysis

Q: Ya and often when children play alone, parents are like they're amazing, they're playing, they can keep themselves occupied for hours…

E: You mean the parents are proud… meantime

Q: Yes there's this sense of pride, and here you bringing this other understanding

E: Yes but it is interesting because when I thought about it… oh I used to play in my garden, it is, it is clearly a positive memory, so I must hold onto that and maybe not over analyse it but it, it made me cry earlier because it just, it just, I just thought… I think it made me cry because I thought if I was happy then, being alone, in my little house, my so called house, can I not achieve that now that's what I'm asking. Ya… it's very interesting

Q: Maybe there's a difference between play and real life, I mean as you said those kids in china or where ever it is they're not playing but half way across the world kids are doing the same activity and it's considered play.

E: Yes, exactly

Q: Well… thank you. Thank you for being so open and sharing such a meaningful memory. I would just like to remind you that if I have opened a box that has upset you, and if after I leave you are still feeling like you need some help with regard to this. Please contact one of the therapists I have offered for additional support. Play and memories can be very emotive and if you feel like you need to speak through it, please do not hesitate to contact them.

E: Umm… Ya, thank you… Ya… I just, I do want to say that I wish, I wish, even though I'm playful, I really believe I'm playful, I just wish I would play more, even more. You know, I think I'm always, um you know how we are, people say we're our own harshest critics and I, I just wish that I could let that go and just like, I don't know. Ya… You know I've got a ball a little rubber ball that I sometimes hit here against the wall and stuff, and that, it helps me wake up, it helps me sometimes focus, you know it uses a certain part of the brain, I can feel it, I can just feel that my brain just wakes up, and that kind of thing I wish I could do more of cause its actually structuring a type of play into one's life you know. I dance here, I mean this is my sacred space here, I dance and I think dance is play, but I also dance because I think I need to exercise… It's interesting, ya. I just wish, I just wish I could add more somehow… ya… adults and play

Q: So now I'm just going to invite you to draw, to draw play. However that comes out, or whatever you feel you can just reflect on paper. So here are some colours… so whatever

E: So drawing play ne?

Q: Whatever comes to mind with relation to play, the idea of play

E: I just want to feel the crayons, to me that's part of it… cause I love… ooh they're so nice and smooth… so this actually just me feeling the crayons, this isn't me depicting play (laughter)

Q: Perhaps you're playing

E: (Drawing) so you're actually recording now, it's interesting cause you're recording as I play.

This green patch could almost be like a playing field… (sigh)… so… I feel like play is, it's, it's haphazard sometimes, it has to just happen… Ya ne… And you know what, this is very interesting, I've taken the colour purple and purple is for special occasions in the church. SO I often associate purple with sacred, and I think that play is, can be considered sacred, you know, um and deep... It's kind of why I like, I attend the Anglican Church and they have you know all these different like, um, like sacraments, not sacraments, clothing that go with the different festivals… umm one lady, she showed us the other day how they do relate back to the Hebrew traditions some of them, you know some of the vestments, all of the clothing, literally back to ancient you know, Israel. I just love the colours, like we change, so purple is actually very much associated with Easter… and I think the Church and places of worship are places that should really utilise play more, I think. You see cause you're getting to your inner self, core, I think. (Continuing to draw) I just love the feeling. Okay (pointing to pastels) these ones are messy though, see I don't want to get messy (trying one) Oh but they feel good… Ahh it feels good… it's just going to make a mess though, see, if you play you've got to let go of control and that's actually, I don't want to make a mess in my house you see… And I think that's the great thing about children is that they don't care, they just, you know, they'll make a mess. Oh that's a ball you see… where's my purple ball… here

Q: Is the ball you hit in the morning purple?

E: It is. It actually has pretend, pretend kind of soccer ball type pattern, but it's a little rubber ball. Ya… that's this one and then it bounces… Mm… what else can I use… they've got to feel nice… So it's interesting because I don't know if I'm depicting play or if I'm just playing… (Giggling)… I'm nearly done.

Q: Take your time.

E: Shame it looks scary, it's supposed to be happy, the face

Balloons, balloons are playful, let's see. Mm… ah… maybe some music

Q: So I'm glad you mentioned that, so if you had to give play a sound or a song, what song would you give it? And if you want you can just sing it, or you can tell me what it's called, or you could do both.

E: Mm… I don't know… not doof doof doof doof… but part of doof doof doof doof helps, you know. Um… because like a rhythm… ya… I mean a song jumped to mind eh from what's this guy. (Singings) shadow walks faster than you, you don't really know what to do, do you… what is his name… but ya… like nursery rhymes as well… a bit of nonsense… umm… but like nonsense tunes are good… and you know how you sort of humm to yourself, you sort of humm nonsense things… I want to make them yellow, like they're bubbles of happy sound. Hmm, I think I'm just about done.

My mind is back to, my mind is going back to the little house… and the little bowls of I don't know the little food you know… maybe this is like the, the wall, it was… on the sides of my house… I had a guinea pig too, ya, I used to have guinea pigs, same house. Its seems like that particular age has the strongest memories in that particular house, but at that same house, my parents decided to leave Zim and to go live in Kimberly (forced cough) it was delightful and I remember sitting… oh no, it might have been a different house, I was a bit older, it was different house, and I sat again close to the gate I don't know why, and I sat and I sang a song, I sang this song um Kimberly, Kimberly, let's go live in Kimberly with all the rocks we'll tell them pull up their socks or else we won't go live in Kimberly, can you believe it. I mean I hardly knew anything about Apartheid I was like eleven, I think I was twelve years old, I knew I had to go live in South Africa where there was Apartheid, I mean there was practically Apartheid in Zimbabwe and… you know, we were privileged whites living in white suburbs with… and there I was singing about Kimberly. It comes from that song Harmony, harmony, let's all live in harmony… ya… ya… you see the berries

Q: What berries were they?

E: These one's you get on like fences, on, on hedges, so they were tiny little red berries. I think I was always tempted to eat them… Ya… I think now this is like a bit of soil, maybe I did soil and berries… I remember mixing things, you know, and I'm no cook, I can tell you um… and ya… and the weather was nice, that was lekker… (giggling) and I have to add my swimming pool at Sarah's house… shows my privilege… that's a pool. Hmm… and no childhood is complete without a bucket for sand, what you call, um for going to the beach, that's a nice memory. So I have, you know how photographs make you think that you've got a memory but actually the photograph, you know the photograph is… how do you say, making you think you remember it. So there are pictures of us obviously on the beach digging in the sand.

Q: Which beach?

E: So we would go from Leshoto, so I was, I was, in Lesotho I was living there when I was from birth and I think we left, I was… maybe… four years old… so as a toddler and up to four years we would go from Lesotho and we would go to the South Coast, probably Margate beach or South Coast or St Michaels or… and there pictures of… of us playing on the beach you know in the sand and you know daddy helping to dig and ya… Ya. I still when, as an adult if I go, even just now, I went to the beach and I was alone on the beach but I was digging, now as an adult, it's just, the beach is one of the best, one of the best places. I want to just add some eyebrows but I can't find… Ya… I think also part of play though, and I think that if you are playing with others, sometimes it involves negotiation. And maybe, maybe playing alone is nice because you're just negotiating with yourself, maybe… Ya so I don't know… Ya… ad a spade maybe… do you remember these spades hay… Ooh yes…. These smooth crayons… I must get some of these. So… And collecting so even as an adult, it's amazing how the drawing makes you think of more and more stuff hey, even as an adult umm… if I go on the beach I still will sit and dig a little bit with my hands and I will still also collect, I don't like collecting shells so much because apparently they should stay on the beach and they should be reintegrated into the whole system apparently, but, I know collect sea glass. Ya, and it's in my bathroom right now and just the other day I was thinking no I should ah, this is supposed to be a shell… I should play with my sea glass. I love taking it out and then just put it out and then you just reshuffle and you play with it, very calming, maybe like a Buddhist sand, I've never done a Buddhist sand tray… Ya… Umm… I think I'm about done. I want to colour my balloons… Let me see… You get blue balloons hey… Hm (admiring her image)

There's something, there's something, there's a sadness and I don't know what it is… So I'm just going to put a sad face here (beginning to cry). Ya… Ya… so maybe the sad musical notes are also the sacred ones, let's see… Ya… there we go. One flower maybe… just for growth… (Sigh)… Ya… There we go

Q: So… I mean I am going to ask your permission to keep this but I will return it to you, if that is okay, if you would like to keep it that's also fine. I can take a picture of it

E: Maybe I'll take a picture of it… I'm fascinated to know if, to know in terms of like the sadness that comes up I don't know, it's interesting… Just hold it up for me… I want to decide if I want to add anything… ya… I could tweak but I think its fine.

You know and I think of children now who are just doing PlayStation and are just on their phones and not in the their gardens, it makes me so sad, in a way, you know, that play has changed so much… Ya.

Q: Great, thank you, thank you

Interview One Participant F

Q: So the first thing I'd like to ask you is what is play, for you?

F: I would say play is an indication of one's inner child. And for children play is an expression of whatever they are feeling.

Q: And… as adults, do we play?

F: I think often we are playing, we're often playing a very important role, often our whole lives are play representing either how we're feeling, what we'd like to feel, or how we don't want to feel at all… as adults, with adults.

Q: So if I am hearing you correctly, play in adulthood and play in childhood is very different

F: Ya, that is what I think… except if you're playing with a child, as an adult. You're playing with a child, you steer the child to forms of play that you think are good for that child, where you might have missed out on that in your own childhood.

Q: Hmm… So would you say you play?

F: I play. I play. In fact I play very often… um roles that I think I need to play in certain circumstances

Q: So I am hearing you say that playing is being

F: Playing is being in reality and in circumstances and sometimes ones whole life is a play in terms of what you think people's needs are… In that form of play… In that situation

Q: So… there's this man his name is Stuart Brown and he speaks of play and he speaks of it particularly within adulthood and he has an institution which he started in America called The National Institute of Play. So he speaks… he speaks to this audience and he asks them to try access their earliest or happiest memory of play, and so I'm asking you, if you could think of your earliest most memorable play memory, what would it be, and if you could explain it to me in the most detail that you can remember.

F: So I can be emotional

Q: Of course you can, I should just mention that if at any time you want to stop telling your story or you feel like I have asked you too much please stop me, and also just to remind you that there are therapists who I can refer you to should you feel you would like to speak to someone.

F: So my earliest memories of play was before my dad died (starting to cry) and we would play on a Sunday, while he lay in the sun, and we would bring him water, and the one who brought him the most delicious drink was the winner. We used to go on holiday and we also used to play the same kind of thing in Cape Town and… I used to play at night when they had visitors because I was the baby and spoilt, but this was before five, this was when I was four, couldn't sleep and I'd walk past them and he'd say ah she's just a baby, and it worked every time, and I would jump into his lap and I would just be comfortable playing, pretending, pretending not playing, pretending. That was my youngest form of play.

Q: And that memory of the water, where did that take place?

F: It took place in Orange grove and in Cape Town on Muizenburg beach ah where we used to go to my aunt where there was like, everyone used to get there, there was no money, but we used to go there for holidays and there were eight children, we used to sleep eight on the floor and then we

would go to Muizenburg everyday… And he loved lying in the sun, and we would bring him buckets from the sea and because I was the youngest I was the cutest. So I would be the one to be playing

Q: So you were about four?

F: Four, he died the day after my fifth birthday. That's when playing stopped

Q: Sho… So you don't remember playing after five?

F: I didn't play for a long time… Ya, playing playing, no.

Q: So play for you is very much connected to your father?

F: And family… Umm ya, ya, but young

Q: Hm… What did you use to put in the water?

F: Ice, and throw it over him and he would pretend he was sleeping… And also at night, I used to go into his bed and I used to pretend that I couldn't sleep and I used to jump into his bed, if this is play and I think it is a kind of play… and I remember him holding me with his very big hands, but he wasn't, now I realise he wasn't that big, but to me that was big.

Q: And… playing with your siblings… during those years

F: My siblings, there's a big age gap… So I can't remember playing with them, except being naughty, to them and being chucked out their room. I don't re... It was a young memory so after that there wasn't playing; there was just stuff, after the fifth birthday.

Q: And playing with friends?

F: Ya, I had lots, I had lots of friends, um and we had lots of, we did play, we played, it was a whole group of girls from Orange Grove, we went to Yiddish Folk, and we did, we played. Umm and we played amazing imaginary games in fact even after five, now that you bring it up. We had a band and we used to play on tins, we used to drum on tins and umm in fact we used to bath early and go into the street and play whatever game we played, and we did, we did play, we did play, even after my.

Q: Do you remember any of those games in the street?

F: The band, the band was one of them

Q: What did you play in the band?

F: A drum, a tin, just an empty tin, just an empty tin that we got from the kitchen. Umm… And… I had friends that I… but do you know what this wasn't play… this was like just ah relationships where I would go sleep over and most times they would have to take me home because I didn't want to sleep there… they slept in the pitch dark and I didn't like it, so, we would play games, as long as it was light, and when it was dark they always said 'she's going to want to go home'. Okay… but then, friends changed because after I was five and after my brother was finally out of hospital, we moved. So… Umm… we moved away from Orange Grove, but I still had those friends until I moved to Kimberly. I moved to Kimberly when I was ten, and the in between years were filled with hospitals,

there was play but I can't really remember fun play, I cant remember fun. That's why it's so important that my children always played and were happy.

Q: And… In Kimberly?

F: Kimberly was difficult, there were three children, well two children, my sister never went there. This was when I was ten nearly eleven, um whose mother married a bachelor who was very attached to his nieces and nephews, and they were not very happy that these children had come into his life. So Kimberley was initially very hard until I formed my very close friends, um on my own, but, ya, we went through a little bit of hell in Kimberley, you know. I don't associate play with Kimberley with play I associate Kimberley with being an adult, even though I was eleven, I was an adult, I had to act as an adult, I had to remember to greet everybody otherwise I was in big trouble. I remember that I was… demoted in classes because I was a baby, and they didn't want me to be with them but… I worked through that and formed my own friends, and then it wasn't play it was just amazing deep friendships, but adult friendships, not play. If you talk about free play, where children just play um when I look at my children who just played, who dressed up and had, no, it was serious, my life was serious, but I was happy

Q: So it's interesting… it's interesting because you first defined play in your adulthood before you defined your childhood play and you defined your adulthood play, and correct me if I'm wrong, I might be wrong, um as, as role play as playing in situations and I hear you say that from the age of five and then from ten onwards, you played roles

F: That was my life, I have played roles, I didn't play, I'm very good at role play

Q: And that is or has been a form of play and I feel like for you there is a sadness in that because even though you're defining play as that you don't really believe play is that.

F: Ya, I don't believe play is that, I believe role play is an adult thing, okay, but I was role playing from the age of five… And It was, I quite enjoyed it. I mean I was aware that I was role playing, so I played my role, and I got quite good at it

Q: So do you consider yourself a player?

F: Ya. A role player

Q: So when you mention fun play or free play, you don't consider yourself a player?

F: No. Carefree play… carefree play is happy, you know, just being. And that was, in fact there were, when my husband and I first got married, we played. That was probably the first time that I just, we played and enjoyed childish play, but I was already married. So… for the majority of my life I've role played… not fun played. But when the, when my husband and I were married we played, we had fun, and we played with our children. But it should be, I believe, that you should play when your age is young and carry that play on, not have this huge gap… So there was from five until twenty-four that there was no play, there was role play, and then as I got older there was more roleplay but there were years when I first got married that there was just fun play, we played

Q: And so if I asked you again, and there may not be any, about play memories

F: Fun play memories, umm

Q: Other than those beautiful water memories

F: Ya, before my dad died. Would be fun play memories would be when I was married.

We excluding like naughty things, you know, that's not fun, that's, you know, my years in Kimberly there was time where I was a rebel um but that wasn't fun play, that was… rebel play, it wasn't, so it was when I was very young, then I was an adult until I got married and then we had fun play for, at least fifteen years, we just, played.

Q: What did you play?

F: Anything, we were very childish, we just played anything

Q: If you could think of one story or one memory or a moment, just a moment.

F: A moment. We, ya we would dress up, we we played, we played fun things, you know. Um we played fun, and we laughed, and to me play is laughter, just real laughter and certainly when we were first married, we laughed, and we laughed with our children and we played with our children and that was real play, to me, real play and fun play and happy play.

Q: Hm, so just to close off any last ideas or thoughts or memories

F: No, I've got memories, and then this… terrible umm… and it was through my most vulnerable years of post-father's death, brothers hospitalisation, going to Kimberly, and I actually now block off Kimberely, but I won, my role playing won, as much as they hated me I came out winning, and then being here I also had to role play, all by myself, seventeen, I just turned seventeen and then meeting my husband who was an enigma, and my whole thing was just getting into that mind and then playing with him. He is the ultimate player umm ya until things were not so playful anymore, it became reality but ya, I'd say my biggest play memories are with my children and with my father and mother.

Q: Awesome, thank you. So just before we, I would like to invite you to use any of the colours provided and just draw play. Whatever comes to your mind. It doesn't have to be a literal picture, it can be a scribble it can be a dot, it can be whatever, just try let yourself draw, just go for it.

F: That's quite a hard concept for me cause I'm not very creative, so what you asking me is just to draw or play

Q: How ever you, just go for it

F: (Long hesitation) I've got to draw play?

Q: So I am just saying play to you and then asking you to draw, so however you interpret that, whatever comes.

(Long silence F drawing)

F: Okay, so do you want to know what this is?

Q: Sure

F: So this was me and my three children… Um, on a Saturday… Ah when my husband was playing golf. We used to play in my bedroom, with toys… Um, either at a table, or building, I haven't written building, and this is playing at, in Plettenburg Bay, all five of us, we were always playing, um, there's the sea, there's the sand, there's the sun, I can't draw a drawing but we were doing something, always fun at the beach, that was our playing… Weird… A little bit

Q: Can you think of a moment?

F: Every Saturday, this, every Saturday, with my children, in fact I should actually, build… blocks… okay, there was always blocks, we always had blocks, and we played, and we had fun, we really had fun, even my daughter was just a baby but the boys would play with her, the best play that I have ever had is with my children, that was my play. This, I can't draw it, but we played lots of things, we played, I should write, in the garden there was a tree, remember the tree in my garden, and we all played in this garden.

Q: What games did you play under the tree?

F: We played, from cricket, okay it's not going to show it here cause I'm not a very good drawer, from cricket, to eye spy, to climbing I mean in the big big mountain, where the fountain was, to… Um… to tea parties under the tree to people just coming and there were always people just coming in, and that was, it's just strange that this was the play I remember once we were married, with my children… Um, and this, here, was, in Plett, okay I can't draw everything but there was just everything that was play, Plett was play, whether it was looking in the lagoon, if I could draw I would draw looking for pencil bait in the lagoon, looking for chochos and crabs in the lagoon, this sea and this lagoon, here, here's the mouth of, okay so this, this is the sea, this is us and everything associated with that was play, was fun… we really played, and if our children think about it, they'll remember this play, the boys will remember this play my daughter was a bit young but then her friends played in that same garden, when they were little small, where we played in my bedroom with the blocks and sitting at the table and we played and we laughed and we had such fun.

Q: If you gave play a song, what song would you give it?

F: I'd give it every nursery rhyme, every nursery rhyme that is in the book because we always sang, we always sang nursery rhymes

Q: Can you sing me one?

F: Can I sing you a nursery rhyme?

Q: Ya… your favourite one

F: Oh there so many but um little boy blue come blow your horn, the sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn but where is the little boy who looks after the sheep, he's under the haystack fast asleep. Sing a song of sixpence a pocket full of rye four and twenty black birds baked in a pie, when the pie was opened the birds began to sing and what a dainty dish to set before the king. The king was in his counting house counting all his money the queen was in the parlour eating bread and honey, the maid was in the garden hanging up the clothes and down came a black bird and picked

off her nose. Incy wincy spider… they all… you name it I know the thing, and, between the children and I there were always songs that we played with, when I think of play, that's what I think of my children and play.

Q: Did anyone ever sing nursery rhymes with you when you were little?

F: Not really no, my sister got the nursery rhymes, by the time ya, I got the cuddles, I don't remember nursery rhymes, I don't remember nursery rhymes. I don't remember play

Q: A song anyone sang to you?

F: Yes, I remember, cause I won a beauty contest, um she wore an itsy-bitsy teeny-weeny yellow polka dot bikini… I remember that being sung, because I had a little polka dot, I won the competition.

Q: How old were you?

F: Well, it was before five so I was about three, but they always sung polka dot bikini to me um… Ya then there wasn't much singing.

Q: Amazing, thank you

F: This is weird, but if you can understand it from what I've told you, okay this is when I remember play with my children and with all five of us

Q: Why do you say it's weird?

F: Because one should remember, one should have had play when one was young, but I think it made me a stronger person… Um there were happy times, in my childhood, happy times, um but I became serious, things got serious too young… And before five, you don't really remember things, you have things told to you, do you know what I'm saying, so the memories, I can't remember the memories, I can remember that going to Cape Town was fun, that we had such fun, my parents, in fact my parents on a Sun, and this I do remember and I should say it cause it is a form of play. Every Sunday night they would roll up the carpet and dance, with all of us, we would dance and my uncle and his wife were proper dancers, they danced in competitions and they won competitions, um and they would come and bath us, and my parents had fun, I remember fun being, they danced to Latin American music, and they danced, they really jolled, without alcohol, but they'd always roll up the carpet, and my father was fun, I remember on a Sunday morning he would say, who's making waffles, so that was fun, it wasn't play though, it was fun, um it was happy times, the dancing on a Sunday night, it was happy times, going to synagogue were happy times that I do remember, but then suddenly… it just stopped, the memories were blocked. I do remember things, it's not like, people say they don't have any memory, I can, I've got a memory that will remember many things, but as I say when you talk about play and fun, I think that kind of stopped at five, until I created my own play, and even though I had good friends in Kimberley we never played, we were adults, ya, and I had to first get through those years to make friends.

So I never played hopscotch.

So I did love, love imaginary play, where, in those days there weren't um, there was no TV, there was nothing, and when I did play with friends in Kimberley, we used to construct things over the pool and imagine that we were mermaids or things which I actually saw my children do, but, I was able to enjoy imaginary play and spend eight hours um around something imaginary, and I was able to do imaginary play with myself. I used to sit in my room and play the most lovely games in my head with whatever was there, whether it was my doll or my bed or whatever and then pass it on to my younger siblings who I played imaginary games with, and then pass it on to my children who I played imaginary games with, so imaginary games instead of say even blocks, and with the blocks there were imaginary games um

Q: What age was that around?

F: Imaginary games started at about fourteen, we were quite immature in Kimberley, but then I had a boyfriend by the time I was fifteen, but we, say thirteen, but even whether it was with the boyfriend, I could play imaginary games, I loved imaginary games, and I taught my children to play imaginary games, where we could be just in this room and we could actually be, imagine, a place, and my husband was also very good at it, where we could play imaginary games. When I was very, even when I was very small, okay, I participated in the games with my friends even before we went to Kimberley, but you block them, ya, like when I first started here, I didn't remember those imaginary games, in fact there's a lot that I don't remember but I would remember… if I had to think about it.

Q: If you could think of your favourite imaginary game, what would it be?

F: Being a mermaid, being a mermaid, where I could be something that I wasn't, being a beautiful mermaid that just had control over everyone, and everybody was kind and everybody was sweet, and I just taught them how to be kind and sweet, I remember these games, and being kind and sweet, everybody even the baddies became kind and sweet because I wanted everyone to be kind and sweet because kind people are lucky and sharing is caring and that's, from my youngest imaginary games, that was the most important thing, that everybody became kind and sweet, that there were no baddies, that you could change the baddies into being kind… And that's what I even teach my granddaughter, caring is sharing and we can change, there's always good people, you got to change the baddies to goodies and that can be changed. So that was quite important, those were my imaginary games, always, that there were always baddies, and the baddies could be changed even though they weren't.

Q: Did the baddies also live in the swimming pool, in this water?

F: Not only the water, they lived around the swimming pool, because the swimming pool was hot, it was Kimberley, it was hot ahh on the floor was hot. So even if the baddies came out on the hot part we would always get them eventually to be cool in the swimming pool, and they would be kind, all my imaginary games were that people had to be kind… and they did, if it took me eight hours to get them to be kind, that would mean the whole of Sunday, to get them to be kind, they would be kind by the time I left the swimming pool.

Q: Ya…Wow… Thank you. What a story or stories. Really appreciate you time and your telling. Thank you

Appendix D

Follow-up Discussions

Interview Two Participant A

Q: My name is play and I'm uniquely me

Because I change with each person individually

You see, I belong to you and to you

I belong to her and to you too

But my being is different in each memory

And that's why we call it personal play history

My name is play and today is my day

Because I've invited you here to witness your play

I remember your story and I hold it with care

And those dear moments I am here to share

So don't be shy

Smile, laugh, cry

As we travel to witness and carefully see

The beauty that's held in memory

And over the mountains in a place called Farm

Lives a brave little girl with a strong forearm

She watches as the adults do what they do

And decides she wants to be like them too

So she fills up the wheelbarrow right to the brim

And wheels it with force to the nearby stream

She pretends to be washing all of her clothes

And when she is finished turns back and goes

Up a hill that feels ever so steep

As the adults walk past her pushing their heap

She reminds herself, next time, stay home and play

Because before you know it you'll be an adult someday.

At the top of the hill when she finally arrives

She is grateful that she is there and alive

She hurries back with her soaking wet load

Hangs them to dry and leaves for the road

With her she takes her five marble balls

Safe in her pocket where they cannot fall

She is off to the place where they'd always meet

Out on Intsuma Street

She is ready to play because she knows how to flick

She'll beat all the players, and then they'll kick

Her favourite marble is cream and see through

But she doesn't play that one cause it's fairly new

If she'd lose that dear marble to one of the boys

It would be a sad day for her and her toys

Back in the days, back in their youth

They still do it I guess, but now there's the truth

Of adulthood creeping in from the sides

Stresses, and gloom, shadows that guide

With children or learners, teaching them how

Some still play, as adults now

A: Wow

Q: So that's just bits and pieces, um ya,

Through the process I realised how stories also overlapped. So there may be other poems that you will definitely relate to, or something in it that will sound familiar. So ya… any thoughts, feelings, ideas?

A: It's actually taking me to the process that I'm doing now… The play I'm currently doing, its more on personal stories, its people telling their personal stories and it's the old aged and the youth so they come together, we're playing, playing, and through that playing process, we take out personal stories and we create a performance. So it, it's so, I think I was telling them the other day, and saying that you should know that guys even how sad or how difficult or how lovely or beautiful your story is somewhere somehow their stories they meet, there's a common factor somewhere and its actually, I was speaking it, and I was just saying it but it's actually, it's true, cause now that you say it and you see it with my own story, which I was like ah it's just play its just you know, so ya it's, your thing is very relevant and its very strong I think, cause I'm also experiencing it, and I'm doing it

Q: Oh Wow thanks for sharing that with me

A: Yours, it's beautiful, it's powerful

Q: So… ya… those were two of your stories that just stood out for me, they held so much character and so much life and when you told them you were like jumping out of your skin, so that's why I picked those… ya so… I mean if you think there is something that does not apply, or something you would like me to include.

A: These days at work, every Thursday we have a workshop with a Lady, so what she does is, we just sit around the theatre, for eight weeks we are going to be doing that, and last week we were speaking about, okay, last week we were speaking about playing as well, previous week we were speaking about anger de, so she has different week where she, and…and… she asked me, we were talking and then I was like sometimes people block us from realising who we are and then we lose our things in the process, so she asked me what is that and I was like when I was young I was told I can't sing, so I told myself I can't sing, so I can't sing, so she started making me play, making me realise that I can sing and made someone else to be the person, teacher, and I spoke to the teacher and, you know. Um I don't know where that conversation was going… what was your question, but it was linked to your question

Q: We can come back to the question, I mean so interesting, it's just so interesting, what you've said because in our first interaction –meeting you sang and I was hoping you would sing that same song you sang last time.

A: Which one?

Q: Look at the mountains…

A: Oh yes…

Q: And I am just so shocked you brought up singing because it is just so relevant…

A: Wow… Somehow as well like it, it's scary to realise that… its, its, I'm now putting everything together from the experience I have through play and your experience here… it, it's funny and also scary to, to realise how much um we how you see yourself, how you became the person that you are

through certain, it's like you can see the pattern, you can see this made me become a strong person, this made me become a curious person, um this made me become a hard worker, pushing the wheelbarrow down and looking at people, this made me, you know, you see your characters and it's from, it's from being a child. Actually that's why in our tradition most old people they say they can see what kind of child you'll be when you are still young, cause you, sometimes you can tell when a child is very quiet and very silent that oh you know, old people they have a way of seeing it and they'll be like ah this child will be like this. Sometimes its stereotype, it's judging a person, because that's another thing we spoke about last week, is the fact that sometimes things are imposed on us. They'll say ai this child is very naughty, you are going to be a naughty child, and that things sticks into your head that I am going to be a naughty child so I'm going to be naughty, I'll obviously be naughty because from a young age…

Q: It's almost expected of me now…

A: Exactly, it's an age where your mind is grabbing everything… ya

Q: Sho… Okay… so thank you.

A: I can sing

Q: Please do

Interview Two Participant C

Q: So, the last time we met you shared your stories about playing in childhood, memories you had from your youth, and your understanding of play, now, in adulthood. I left with your stories and memories, your definitions, and I attempted to respond to them or rather to capture them in poetry, imagery and other creative means. What I'd like to share with you today, is what I have created in response to what you shared with me, and you can respond to it, in any way, how it makes you feel, what you like or don't like, anything, correct me if I have misunderstood.
C: Okay…

Q: My name is play and I'm uniquely me

Because I change with each person individually

You see, I belong to you and to you

I belong to her and to you too

But my being is different in each memory

And that's why we call it personal play history

My name is play and today is my day

Because I've invited you here to witness your play

I remember your story and I hold it with care

And those dear moments I am here to share

So don’t be shy

Smile, laugh, cry

As we travel to witness and carefully see

The beauty that’s held in memory

And if we move further North and slightly West

There lives a young girl who is simply blessed

Her family are always, always at play

It doesn’t matter the time of day

They tell each other stories, funny and with sound

Acting out things and always so loud

She laughs for hours, cries if you will

She’s laughing at one of their stories still

They play cards, Go fishing and sometimes Ludo

And then outside some of them go

To play Suwe, six squares on the ground

Count and jump and then turn around

Everyone hides and then she must find

This is her favourite game of this kind

All these young ladies I’ve introduced you to

Are actually now adults who do what adults do

Whose lives have adapted and twisted and gained

Some who have laughed and others who’ve pained

They all know me because they all know play

You see, I was with them back in the day

With some I used to play alone

Imaginary games on our own

With others play had to be done

With a group of many more than one

Sometimes rules could not be changed

And sometimes they'd be rearranged

From physical skipping to object play

Each young girl had her play way

And so when I remind them of their days with me

They often retreat in the memory

We really did have wonderful times

Back in their playful prime

And I know when she thinks of Lagos, Nigeria

She thinks of bright blue, she thinks of hysteria

She thinks of joy, happiness and sun

She thinks of the play, she thinks of the fun

She remembers the cards, she remembers the dice

She remembers playing and that play was nice

These women, you see, they used to use me a lot

But in adulthood play is so easily forgot

And adults, you know, they're too busy for me

And are often ruled by society

Once so prominent to their child selves

Now I'm like dust up on a shelf

Although some of them still use my ways

But more as a guiding player, let's say

Not as the main part of the game

It's different now, it's just not the same

Back in the days, back in their youth

They still do it I guess, but now there's the truth

Of adulthood creeping in from the sides

Stresses and gloom and shadows that guide

With children or learners teaching them how

Some still play

As adults now

C: Nice… Very nice (smiling)

Q: And these are also just the pictures or images I drew when responding to your story

C: I loved my poetry… I don't know about others, but mine was… Perfect… That was beautiful. That was total essence of what I told you. So I don't know what they are looking for in your whatever, but for me, it was just beautiful, so I liked that, and I liked the whole poetry thing, beautiful, you're good, your poetry's nice, it really is nice.

Q: Great… Thank you

C: And the pictures ye… They fit… I see this… I can visualise this, all of us, all there… And then the sun… what's this representing?

Q: I think that was me responding to the Go Fish

C: I don't know… but this, sunny days, bright days, the games, home… Beautiful… Noise, sound. Its fine, it's all good , I like

Q: Wow, great, Thank you, I just wanted to honour your story

C: You did, you did it justice, thanks a lot hey

Q: Thank you

Interview Two Participant D

Q: My name is play and I'm uniquely me

Because I change with each person individually

You see, I belong to you and to you

I belong to her and to you too

But my being is different in each memory

And that's why we call it personal play history

My name is play and today is my day

Because I've invited you here to witness your play

I remember your story and I hold it with care

And those dear moments I am here to share

So don't be shy

Smile, laugh, cry

As we travel to witness and carefully see

The beauty that's held in memory

Yes, this over here is another young dame

Who plays Imbhati – her favourite game

She can honestly play this game for hours

Running and diving and building tin towers

She is good at it, shigogo and go

Jumping to avoid the other teams throw

Then she plays umgusha foot

Pantyhose cutting, the tying, the loop

She hopes her umgusha can hold its strength

Even with its super long length

Jumping from ankle, to knee up to thigh

But when waist level comes it's simply too high

Exhaustion starts to slowly creep in

And now it's time for girl time chill-in

She told me of Belgium and started to smile

Performing for strangers street theatre style

She made them all laugh and giggle accord

She made them all dance and sing and applaud

When she thinks of those days she thinks of glee

The happiness felt, the play to be free

I'm honoured because she felt open to say

That those days were her greatest moments of play

Suggesting, explaining, describing them to me

Laughing at the beauty of memory

Q: So ya… Just a response, a word, feeling, thought…

D: Wow (Smiling)

Yes, like, I'm saying even when you read it, it's like wow, it's a wow to me because… You taking me back, and you make me realise that I've been a happy person in my life and I've been open to other people and I've been giving, so maybe now it's time for me to receive as well, as I've been giving, but… What's great about that give its light, enlightment and gratefulness, that's what I'm getting as you, you started reading from the beginning until… So, it's when I have to now, welcome the receiving and receive and receive and keep on being happy, but it's amazing and it's bold. It's big for me how you read it, you, you made it sound, powerful and it's like you see a hurricane when you start… It's starting like brr and then poof. Yes, it's like that when you were reading it, I was like oh wow that's amazing, it's amazing, it is.

Q: Awesome… Good. I'm glad

D: Yes, and I'm happy that… It makes me feel good in a way that I've been the person who I say I am, yes.

Q: So you're feeling like it's a good reflection of you

D: Yes

Q: Great cause that is very important because I don't wat to misread people. I don't want to present you as something that you aren't

D: Yes… Yes

Q: So… Ya… That's pretty much it

Interview Two Participant E

Q: My name is play and I'm uniquely me

Because I change with each person individually

You see, I belong to you and to you

I belong to her and to you too

But my being is different in each memory

And that's why we call it personal play history

My name is play and today is my day

Because I've invited you here to witness your play

I remember your story and I hold it with care

And those dear moments I am here to share

So don't be shy

Smile, laugh, cry

As we travel to witness and carefully see

The beauty that's held in memory

And not far away just around this bend

Lives a another young girl who loves to pretend

This is her house it's sacred and kind

This is her house and it's one of a kind

Its home to her fondest of memories

With mud and leaves and bright red berries

It stands here and seems so very tall

But in fact is actually reasonably small

This house you see carries more than you'd think

It's strong and brave and gone in a blink

It's magical cause it can play all alone

Its magic is here but also unknown

It holds the past in the present day

It holds her sacred time for play

Memories of play have this transformative power

Like something sweet that has almost gone sour

There's something about it that makes her feel sad

Not necessarily cause the memories are bad

She just feels this deep, deep sense of loss

Is it a fear or is it because

She was once so young, spontaneous and she

Was oh so happy and oh so carefree

She knows she can be playful now too

But there's something missing something she can't do

She thinks of the good and she feels so full

She thinks of the worlds in the swimming pool

She thinks of dancing and ballet class

She thinks of her house and that very tall grass

She thinks before then and remembers the beach

But earlier than that the memories don't reach

From Lesotho to Bulawayo to Kimberly

Play was there undoubtedly.

Although play memories are so worthwhile

She remembers with a saddened smile

So, play is weird and wonderfully strange

Play is a chord of musical exchange

Sometimes it's there so clear in its sound

And sometimes it's gone and cannot be found

Play is unique to you and to her

Play can be hard to define or transfer

Play is so much more than it seems

Sometimes just a moment alone or in teams

Play is play and can't be compared

It's hard to come by and so easily shared

Play is complex and yet so simple to do

Play is honest, play is you

E: Hmm… Yoo… I feel like you've covered… My memories in a way, you know, I'm surprised Kimberley came up cause I don't remember speaking about Kimberley, but clearly I did. I think I did

ballet, I started ballet in… No I started ballet in Bulawayo… I don't know what happened in Kimberley I'm surprised I even mentioned Kimberley… Ahh that's funny… Sho. I feel like, I feel like you covered me in a sense, and even in sort of the general as well because it just covers the essence of play as well, and like as you said that fact that we leave it on the shelves, it's like dust on the shelves which is the sad part as well, that's touching on the sad part again, you know. Um… Ya I feel like covered, as it were, if that makes sense.

Q: It does make sense. I's sure you'll find that in the other poems there'll be things that you find familiar. Lik oh ya… I also mentioned that or remember doing that

E: Yes…

Q: SO I did, I found a lot of links and I found a lot of similarities between the different games and things people did and play people played.

E: And I'm looking forward to hearing… Ya… I love the poetry

Q: So I've turned it into a storybook… these are the pictures I drew in response to your stories.

E: Oh… Okay

Q: I haven't used all of them, I've used some. I literally played the recording and just drew as I went along. Ya… that's all really

E: Look at the ballerinas, the ball… That looks like popcorn, oh it must be my berries… Oh and my house… That's great I think there was a fence like that… Ahh the elastic game hey, in, out, in, on… The leaves, the berries, the dancing… that's fantastic, I like the shadow there, playing with your own shadow…The crayons, the balloons, bucket and spade… That's wonderful. So you're going to use the pictures

Q: Ya… The storybook is going to hold the pictures

E: Sho… Nice… Nice… The embodiment and the storybook by you

Q: Just me

E: I feel like what you are producing and playing with is subsumed in beauty. So much beauty, so touching, it is so validating to have our memories held up and brought to the fore in such a safe beautiful and safe way. Thank you

Interview Two Participant F

Q: My name is play and I'm uniquely me

Because I change with each person individually

You see, I belong to you and to you

I belong to her and to you too

But my being is different in each memory

And that’s why we call it personal play history

My name is play and today is my day
Because I’ve invited you here to witness your play
I remember your story and I hold it with care
And those dear moments I am here to share
So don’t be shy
Smile, laugh, cry
As we travel to witness and carefully see
The beauty that’s held in memory
And just down the road in a place called the grove
Lives a little girl of four
The youngest in her family, the one they all adore
And with her dad she plays a race
With a cup of ice to throw in his face
But he pretends to be asleep
And into his lap she comfortably leaps
Muizenburg buckets filled with water and sand
Oh how she loves when he holds her hand
And when they dance on those Sunday nights
Those undoubtedly her highlights

All these young ladies I’ve introduced you to
Are actually now adults who do what adults do
Whose lives have adapted and twisted and gained
Some who have cried and others who have pained
They all know me because they all know play
And shared their thoughts of play in their day

For her play happened before she turned five

When her darling daddy was still alive

Play after that is hard to recall

She knows she played but her playing was small

Although she does know she imagined a land

Where she was a mermaid and baddies were banned

A place where everybody was expected to be kind

A place of good that brightened her mind

She remembers playing drums in their 15th street band

Prior to Kimberly in Orange Grove land

She remembers playing and how that play adjourned

And how when she married that play returned

She played with her husband and children, all three

She played it all, under that tree

But play for her seems hard to articulate

Because role playing is all she can emulate

Role play is ultimately all that she knows

And she mastered it and that's what shows

These women you see, they used to use me a lot

But in adulthood play is so easily forgot

And adults you know they're too busy for me

And rarely have time to care or to see

How important I once was to their inner child selves

Now I'm like dust up on a shelf

So, play is weird and wonderfully strange

Play is a chord of musical exchange

Sometimes it's there so clear in its sound

And sometimes it's gone and cannot be found

Play is unique to you and to her

Play can be hard to define or transfer

Play is so much more than it seems

Sometimes just a moment alone or in teams

Play is play and can't be compared

It's hard to come by and so easily shared

Play is complex and yet so simple to do

Play is honest, play is you

F: (Crying) I think you are brilliant, there's nothing to say, Um… Ya, you got to get on your mountain and go on your way, it is brilliant. It is beyond words. It is everything that is right, it's so true, it is amazing. And I would be privileged to send any child to you, because you get it.

Q: Thank you. Are you okay?

F: I'm fine, it's brilliant, absolutely brilliant, and I must tell you that in my adult life with my children and my granddaughter, that's what I do, is play, and even my children's friends, that's what I do, I play. You are brilliant, it is beyond words brilliant. As long as I get a copy of that poem, it is so so brilliant.

Q: So yes, all of the participants will get a copy of it

F: Great, thank you

Q: Thank you

Appendix E

Post Installation Reflection

Participant E: The way that you honoured us and you've honoured play. So I feel like individuals we have each been recognised and each been honoured and you've also managed to just really really say how special play is and how important it is, which is what I mean by honouring play… Ya

Participant F: Respecting and honouring each of our stories. Through play, and I must tell you that I feel like your using of rhyme, and I did say that earlier, I found that so brilliant because for me rhyme and play go together cause that's the first thing you learn, nursery rhymes which rhyme, and for me, that was always play, and I just found it so sensitive and brilliant that that rhyme went so through your digital display. I just found that you honoured play, you honoured each of our play, or lack of play, and you, you got it. I think each one of us… She just … (Turning to one of the other participants) You said you feeling… You were lacking for words right now

Participant A: Yea… I don't know what to say. It's beautiful, its, you just can't find the proper words to, because I'm looking at the fact that… I've done a play of my own rape story and I've never spoken about the beauty of being a child. Every time you write it's about a sadness or who hit me, or who did this… And the things that make us, which is play, we never speak about, it's a small thing

Participant F: This must have been so uplifting for you because to go back to remember the happy play.

Participant A: Exactly. Actually I was thinking to myself when I was there, how, she made us speak about the beauty of us, something so small. And at the time when I was talking to her, cause I am forever with kids, so it was like ah ya, this is what I did, and then sitting down and actually seeing it and reflecting on it, it was a treat… So beautiful.

Participant E: So interesting because I think… As the other lady just now was saying, how, oh when we sometimes play, when my husband and I play, we suddenly both feel… You know, uplifted, or we feel slightly lighter or you know… It's almost like play… Ya it's almost like play allows the pure part of us to come to the fore… Not always but I think that there's that part where… So if the play is bringing out the inner child, on the whole children are innocent, innocent, so it brings it out again.

Participant F: And that's what Yael for whatever little while, each of us, while she's been with us, that's what she brought out in us. Play, play, play

Participant E: And the inner child

Participant F: And our inner child

Participant A: You know I'm actually…. It makes me realise even today how beautiful play is… How much we… That's why I was like should we continue playing? I think we should, it's… it's… I don't have words Yael… I don't have words… I'm impressed (Turning to the other participants) You guys

have been crying, but I feel like it's going to be my first time to cry today because (Deep breath) Its beautiful… It is… The the way you put it… It connects… How essential it is, wherever you are in the world play is essential to everyone.

Participant F: And you got it, from Lagos, to Belgium to Swaziland, to Kimberley to 15th Street. You absolutely got it, and are we not allowed to take photos, I suppose

Q: You can, you definitely can, you are a participant

Participant F: Could we take photos of the set… Because I just feel that that's... You're saying… Everything that you've done here today… From the time we walked in was about play. So from the time we walked, we were outside, we were stressed, we were caught on the highway there was this massive truck… And we were outside you know the the examiner wasn't here…. And then we came in there was this (Click)

Participant E: That's exactly what I was going to say because that sense of which play removes you from the pain. (Turning to a participant) So you've had the pain in your life but if you were playing in that moment, because you're present with the play, I'm catching the ball, I'm throwing it back, I'm I'm spinning around, I'm putting this here or there, you're very present and therefore the other stuff in your life is momentarily removed… and I think that is also the joy of it.

Participant F: (To researcher) And that's what you've manged to do… Amazing

Q: Thank you

Participant A: I'm happy to be part of this, to have been part of this

Participant F: I'm honoured

Participant A: To be part of this in the future, cause I can see a future in this, there is so much potential.

Participant E: I hope you are going to keep making things like… I know it might kill you but (Laughter)

Q: What I found really beautiful was the connections between the stories, so between those that aren't here, weren't able to make it, and your stories. There was a lot of like little things, just a comment here or there, or 'Ahh I remember… Sometimes we used to skip,' 'Sometimes we used to skip', 'We skipped', 'We skipped', everyone spoke of skipping. It just seemed like one of those things that little girls used to do, wherever they were in the world , they skipped, with string, with stocking, with whatever they could find.

Participant F: When I saw that thing, I said to one of the people next to me, I'd like to play, if I could jump, then I would have played with that Goomie (Umgusha Foot).

Participant A: You know what, when I saw the other games around, like the skip and the Umgusha, I'm like, did I talk about this in my story, did I talk about, because it connected, it felt like oh did do this, I did do this when I was a child… There was so much connection, there was so much connection

Q: So ye, exactly that, and so what I've found, I'll just bring you into the theoretical side of the research, so what I've found is that there are so many perspectives of play, so, from a biological

point of you, from a developmental point of view, from a drama point of view. Play exists in various worlds but is defined buy that world in a specific way, the actual word play. But, there's this underlying theme which I found in all the stories. So actually what the research is more and more moving towards is this metaphor of the relationship I've found between the participants and this, this lived experience that exists for the participants exists in the research of play as well, between the theorists, between the different forms of play. There are these two parallels that exist, practically in the world with young girls, memories and adults and within the theory of play. So it's just really interesting and that's also why I used the street signs, cause of perspective. It's looking up or down the street, its looking at it from this angle or from this angle, or across. So there were a lot of other aspects of the research that I was commenting on, while trying to honour you and your stories. I'm just so forever grateful, I mean even the colours you each mentioned or chose, there were various colours you used in you imagery, you'd notice that the colours, a colour that you mentioned has become your colour, so every time your story is brought into the storybook, your colour is used in the illustration, and that's the same with the chairs... So just little things that I

Participant F: As I say, thank you for honouring me… And being part of this, being part of this part of your journey

Q: It's really been an honour

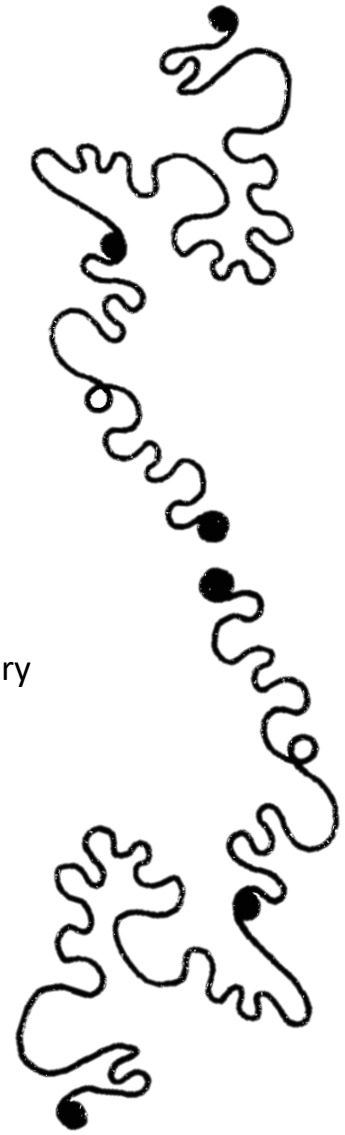
Just the last thing I'm going to ask, although I think you have already answered it, is was the process therapeutic at all.

All: Yes, it was, of course, yes

Q: Thank you, Thank you

Appendix F

The Storybook



My name is Play and I'm uniquely me

Because I change with each person individually

You see, I belong to you and to you

I belong to her and to you too

But my being is different in each memory

And that's why we call it personal play history

My name is Play and today is my day

Because I've invited you here to witness your play

I listened to your story and I hold it with care

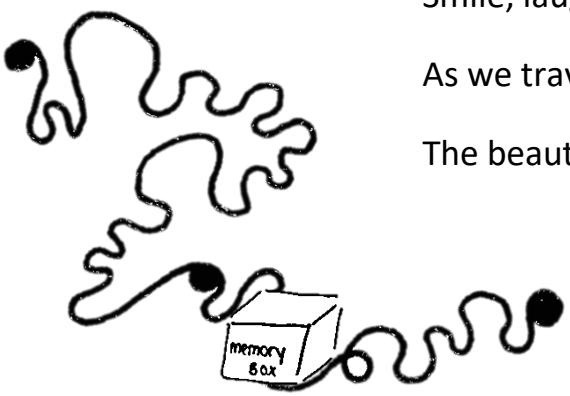
And those dear moments I am here to share

So don't be shy

Smile, laugh, cry

As we travel to witness and carefully see

The beauty that's held in memory

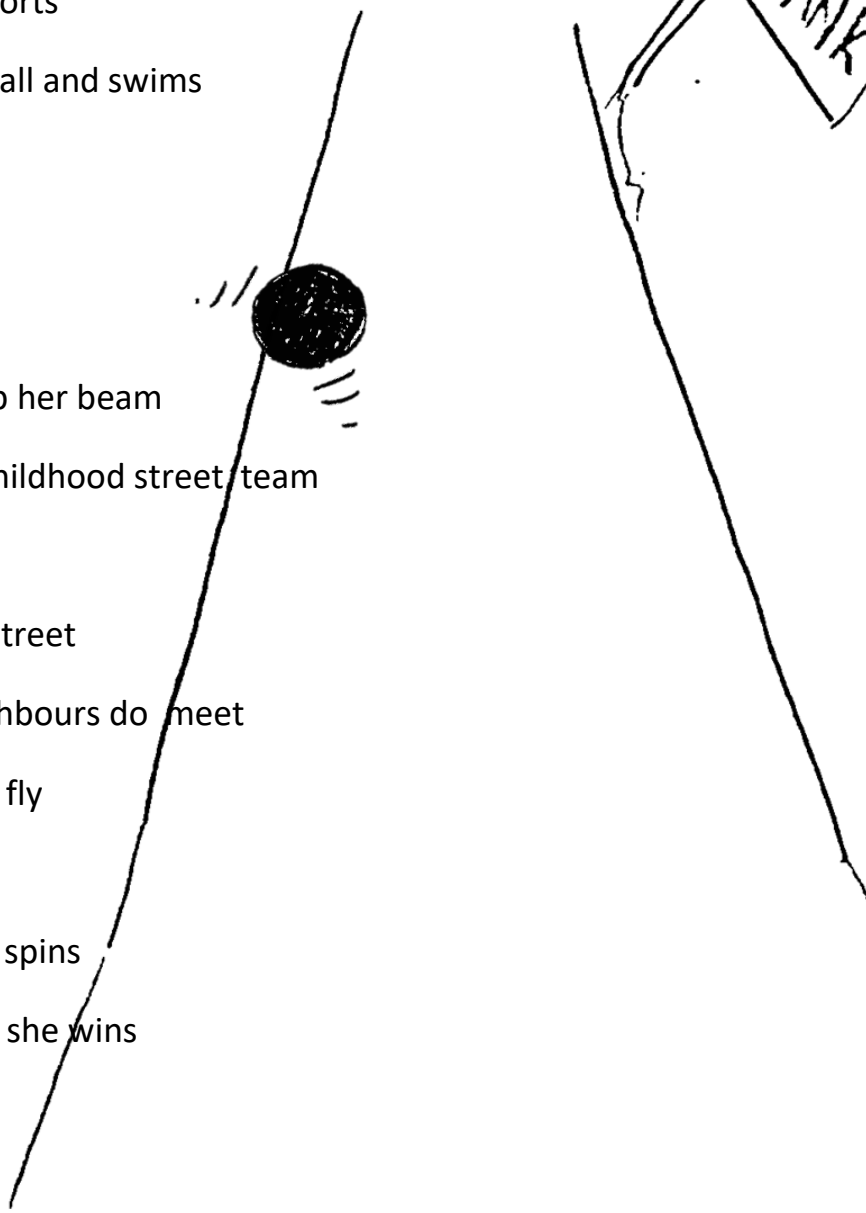


This young girl is timid, quite small

But brilliant at all types of sports

She jumps, she rides, plays ball and swims

She tries every sort



But her favourite play that lights up her beam

Is a game that she plays with her childhood street team

She takes her tennis ball onto the street

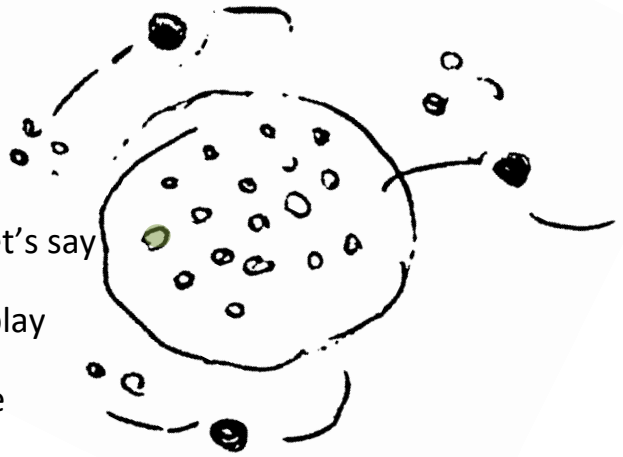
In Eastbank of Alex where the neighbours do meet

She throws that ball and oh does it fly

Winning the game, Shumpu or die

Her jumps, her leaps, her runs, her spins

She's probably best and that's why she wins



And when she goes to her grandmother to visit, let's say

There are other games that she's eager to play

Diketo, the game with stones in a pile

It's tricky but she quickly masters the style

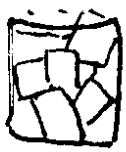
Once she's begun and her hands start to move

She can't stop herself from playing the groove

And just down the road in a place called the Grove, lives a little girl of four

The youngest in her family, the one they all adore

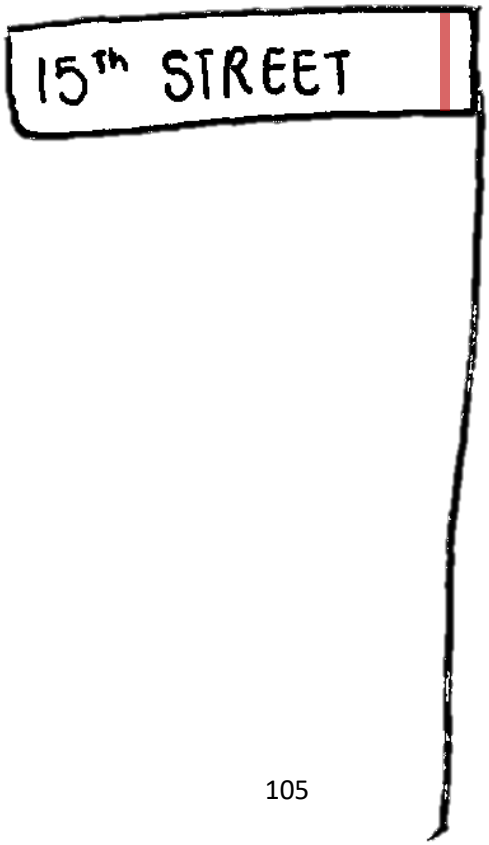
And with her dad she plays a race



With a cup of ice to throw in his face

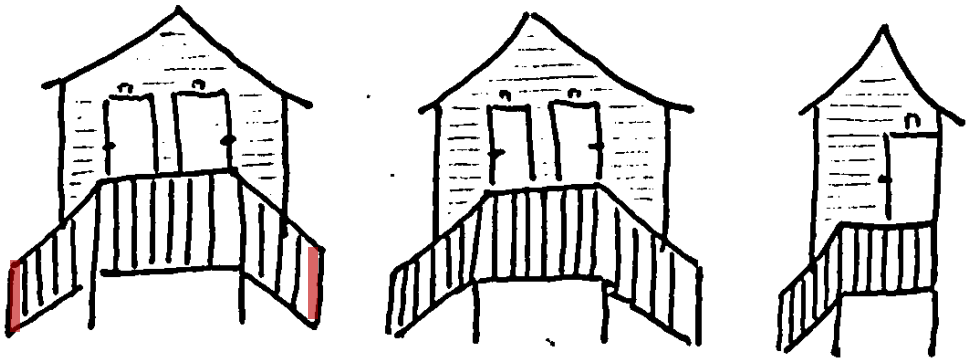
But he pretends to be asleep

And so into his lap she comfortably leaps



Muizenburg buckets filled with water and sand

Oh how she loves when he holds her hand



And when they dance on those Sunday nights

Those undoubtedly her highlights

And just over the mountains in a place called Farm

Lives a brave little girl with a strong forearm

She watches as the adults do as they do

And decides she wants to be like them too

So she fills up the wheelbarrow right to the brim

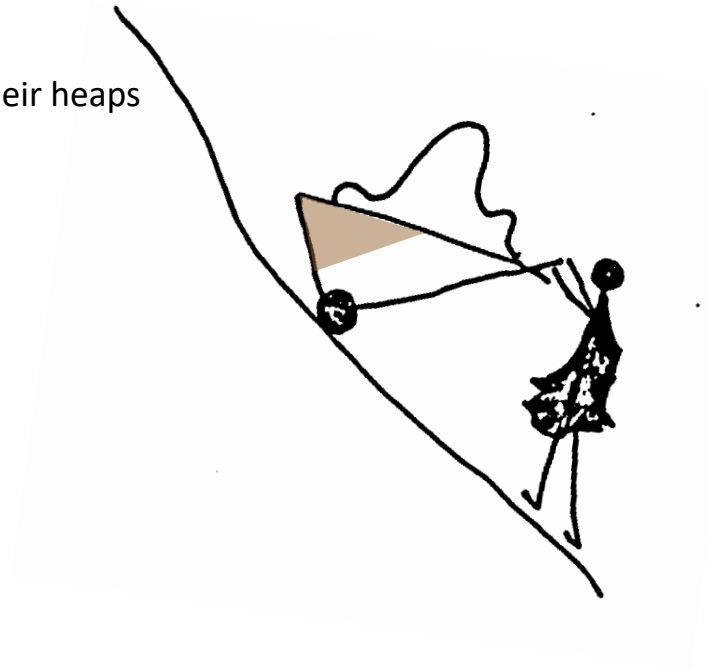
And wheels it off to the nearby stream

She pretends to be washing all of her clothes

And when she is finished turns back and goes

Up a hill that feels ever so steep

As the adults walk past her pushing their heaps



At the top of the hill when she finally arrives

She is grateful that she is there and alive

She hurries back with her soaking wet load

Hangs them to dry and leaves for the road

With her she takes her five marble balls

Safe in her pocket where they cannot fall

She is off to the place where they'd always meet

Out on Intsuma Street

She is ready to play because she knows how to flick

She'll beat all the players, and then they'll kick

Her favourite marble is cream and see-through

But she doesn't play that one cause it's fairly new

If she'd lose that dear marble to one of the boys

It would be a sad day for her and her toys

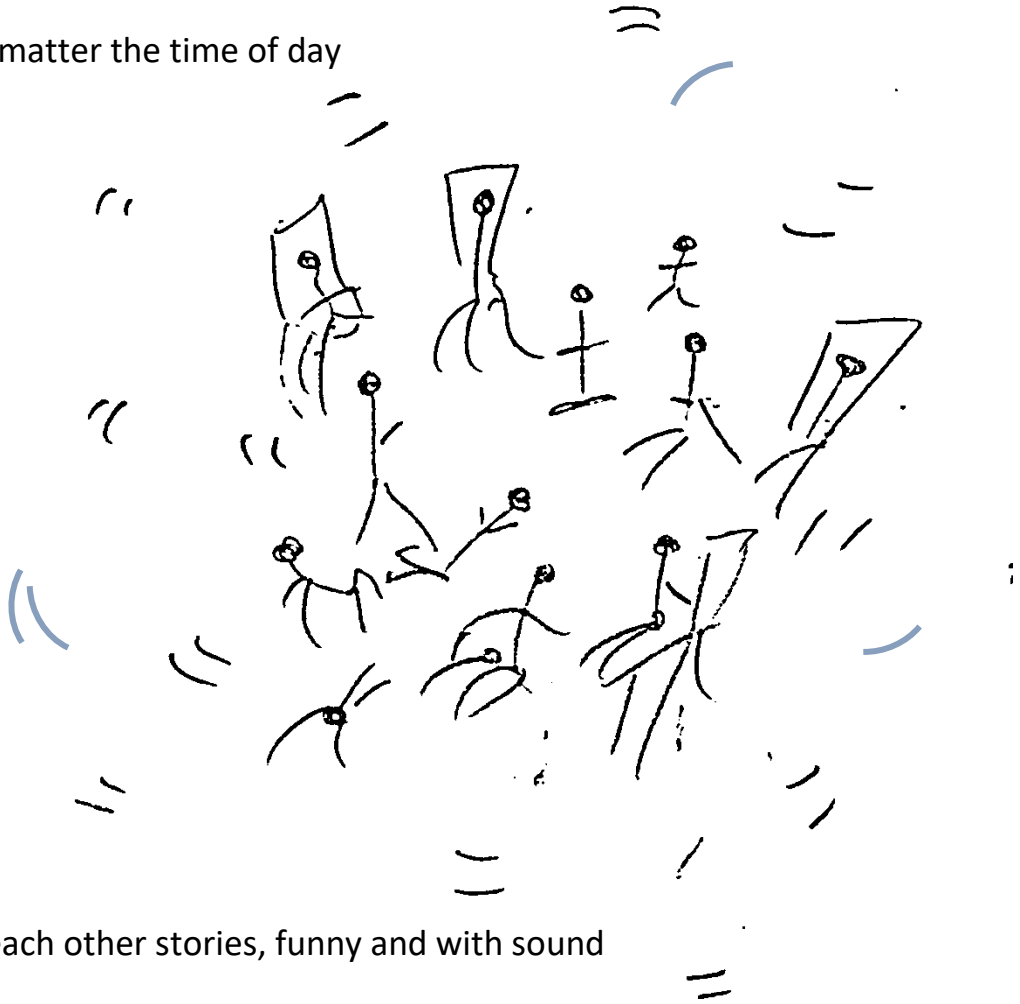


And if we move further North and slightly West

There lives a young girl who is simply blessed

Her family are always, always at play

It doesn't matter the time of day

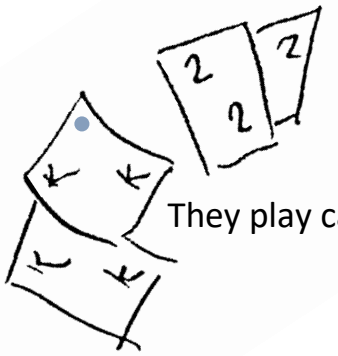


They tell each other stories, funny and with sound

Acting out things and always so loud

She laughs for hours, cries if you will

She's laughing at one of their stories still



They play cards, Go fishing and sometimes Ludo

And then outside some of them go

To play Suwe, six squares on the ground

Count and jump and then turn around

Everyone hides and then she must find

This is her favourite game of this kind

Yes, this over here is another young dame

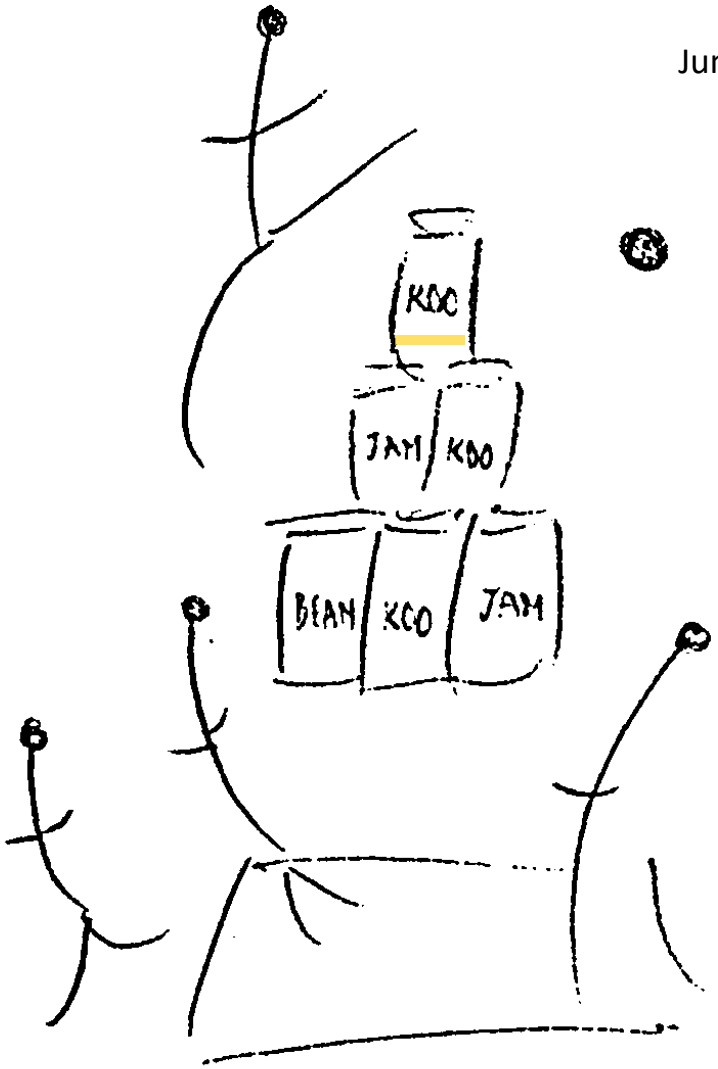
Who plays Imbhati, her favourite game

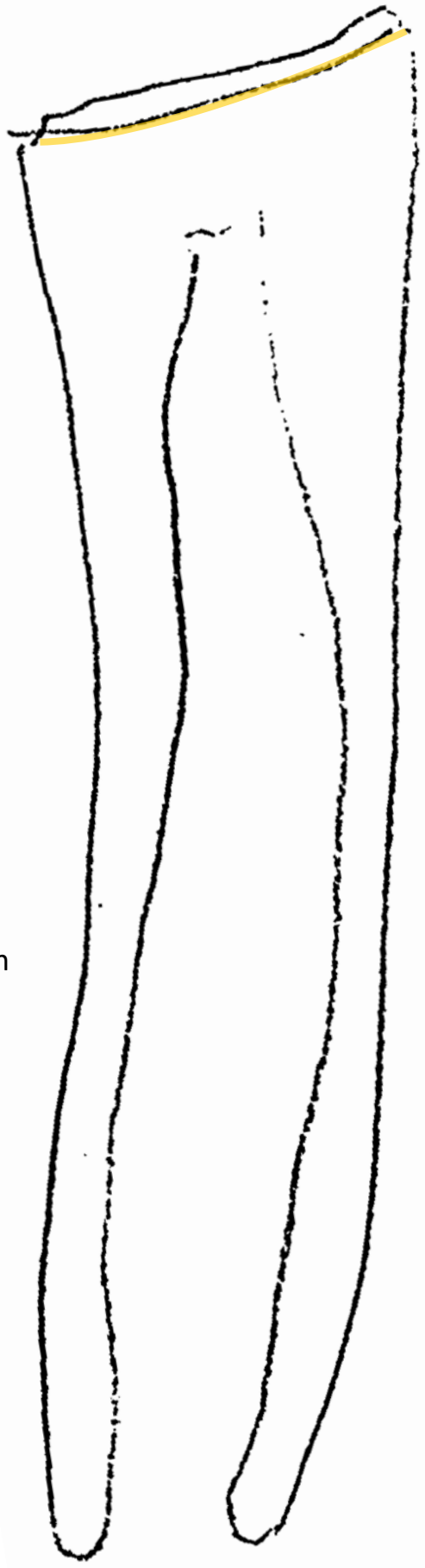
She can honestly play this game for hours

Running and diving and building tin towers

She is good at it, shigogo and go

Jumping to avoid the other teams throw





Then she plays Umgusha foot

Pantyhose cutting, the tying, the loop

She hopes her umgusha can hold its strength

Even with its unbelievable length

Jumping from ankle, to knee up to thigh

But when waist level comes it’s simply too high

Exhaustion starts to slowly creep in

And now it’s time for a girl-time chill-in

And not far away, just around this bend

Lives a young girl who loves to pretend

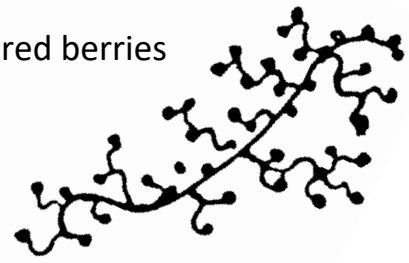


This is her house, it’s sacred and kind

This is her house and it’s one of a kind

It’s home to her fondest of memories

With mud and leaves and bright red berries



It stands here and seems ever so small

But in fact is actually reasonably tall

This house, you see, carries more than you'd think

It's strong and brave and gone in a blink

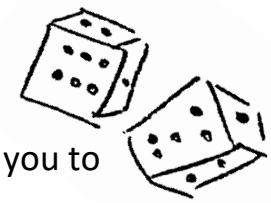


It's magical cause it can play all alone

It's magic is here but also unknown

It holds the past in the present day

It holds her sacred time for play



All these young ladies I've introduced you to

Are actually now adults who do what adults do

Whose lives have adapted and twisted and gained

Some who have laughed and others who've pained



They all know me because they all know play

You see, I was with them back in the day

With some I used to play alone

Imaginary games on our own

With others play had to be done

With a group of many more than one

Sometimes rules could not be changed

And sometimes they'd be rearranged

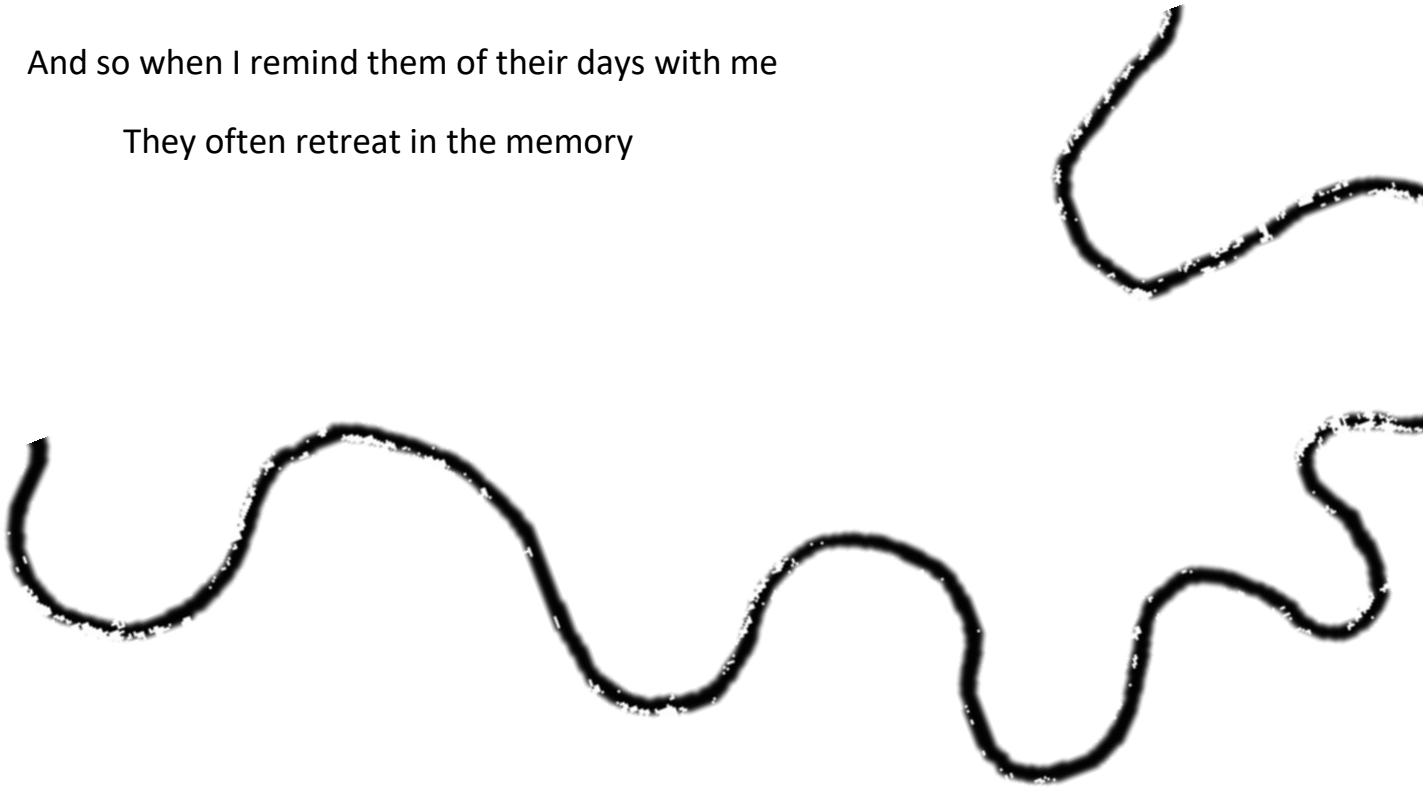
From physical skipping to object play

Each young girl had her play way



And so when I remind them of their days with me

They often retreat in the memory



We really did have wonderful times

Back in their playful prime

For Example

When she remembers Belgium

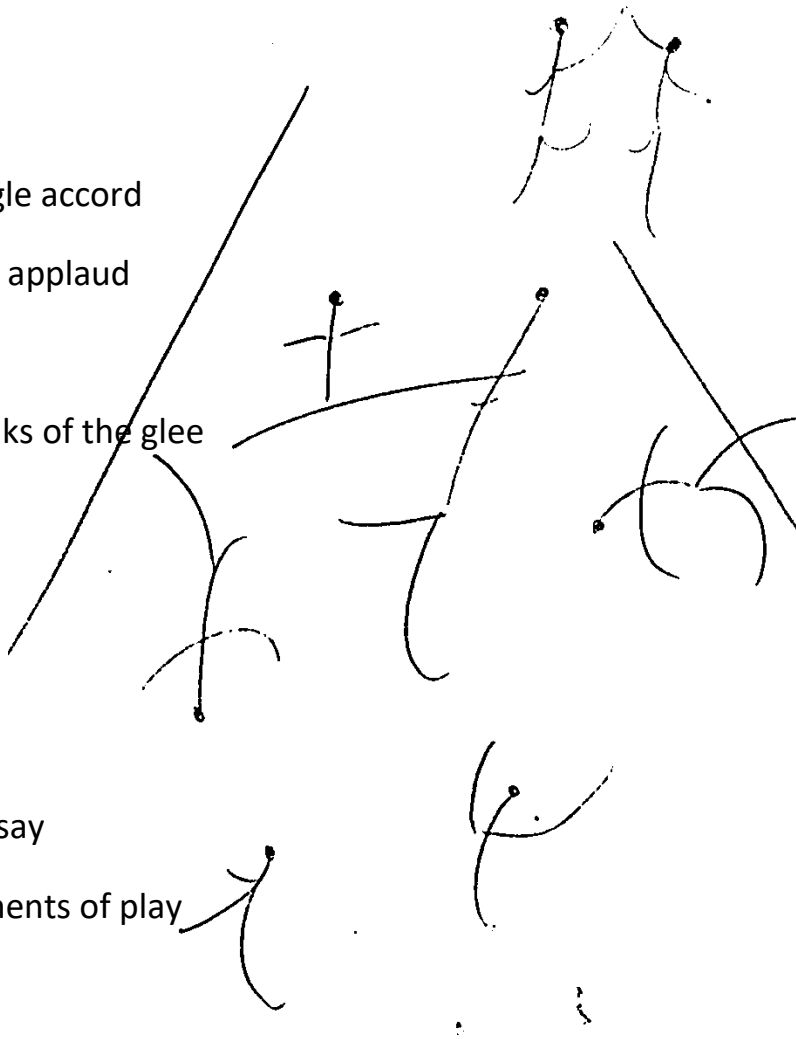
And starts to smile

Performed for strangers

Street theatre style

She made them all laugh and giggle accord

She caused them to dance and sing and applaud



When she thinks of those days, she thinks of the glee

The happiness felt, the play to be free

I'm honoured because she felt open to say

That those days were her greatest moments of play





And I know when she thinks of Lagos, Nigeria

She thinks of bright blue, she thinks of hysteria

She thinks of joy, happiness and sun

She thinks of the play, she thinks of the fun

She remembers the cards, she remembers the dice

She remembers playing and that play was nice

You see play exists in various ways

Like here in this memory from back in her day

She remembers the river where they were forbidden to swim

And her and her cousin could not resist to go in

They saw other kids swim right by

And decided they also wanted to try

So they dipped one toe and were eventually wet

Swimming that day she'll never forget

But when they noticed the time, they jumped right out

Put stones in their lips and hoped the adults wouldn't shout

They grabbed their clothes and hurried straight back

She'll never forget that day, or that smack



For some, the memories are all intact

For others it’s a moment or an extract



With some I’ve played throughout their lives

With others it stopped at merely age five

Like for her

Play happened before she turned five

When her darling daddy was still alive

Play memory after that is hard to recall

She knows she played, but her playing was small

Although she does know she imagined a land

Where she was a mermaid and baddies were banned

A place where everybody was expected to be kind

A place of good that brightened her mind





I remember her playing drums in their 15th Street band

Prior to Kimberley in Orange Grove land



I remember her playing and how that play adjourned

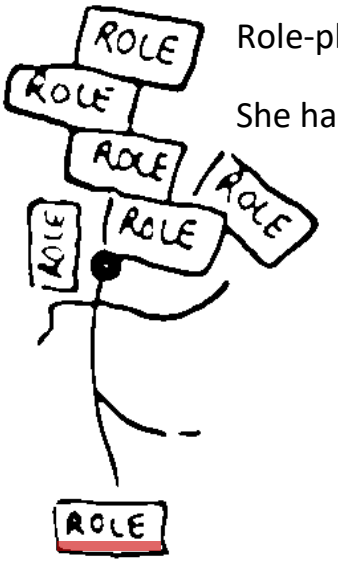
And how when she married that play returned

She played with her husband and children, all three

She played it all, under that tree

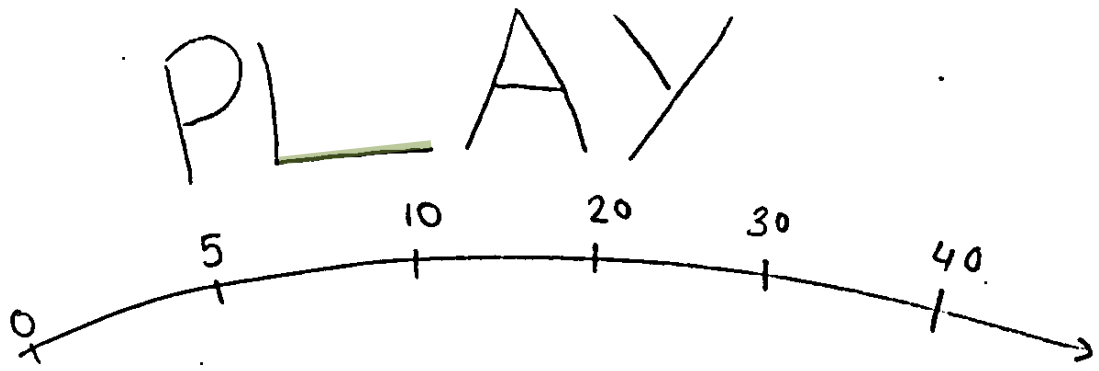
But play for her seems hard to articulate

Because role-playing is all she can emulate



Role-play is ultimately what she knows

She has mastered it, and that's what shows



And, well

With her I've played at every age

But the play has changed to suit the stage

Today it's imaginary stories that instil

Lifelong lessons and coping skills

Her play is with her children now

She guides them through and shows them how



And for her,

The memories have this transformative power

Like something sweet that has almost gone sour

There's something about it that makes her feel sad

Not necessarily cause the memories are bad

I can tell she feels this deep sense of loss

Is it a fear or is it because

She was once so young, spontaneous and she

Was oh so happy and oh so carefree

And even though she can be playful now too

There's something missing, something she can't do

She thinks of the good and she feels so full

She thinks of the worlds in the swimming pool

She thinks of dancing and ballet class

She thinks of her house and that very tall grass

She thinks before then and remembers the beach

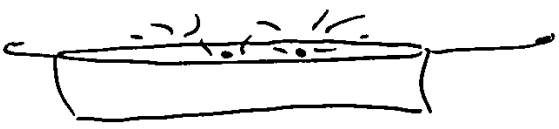
But earlier than that the memories don't reach

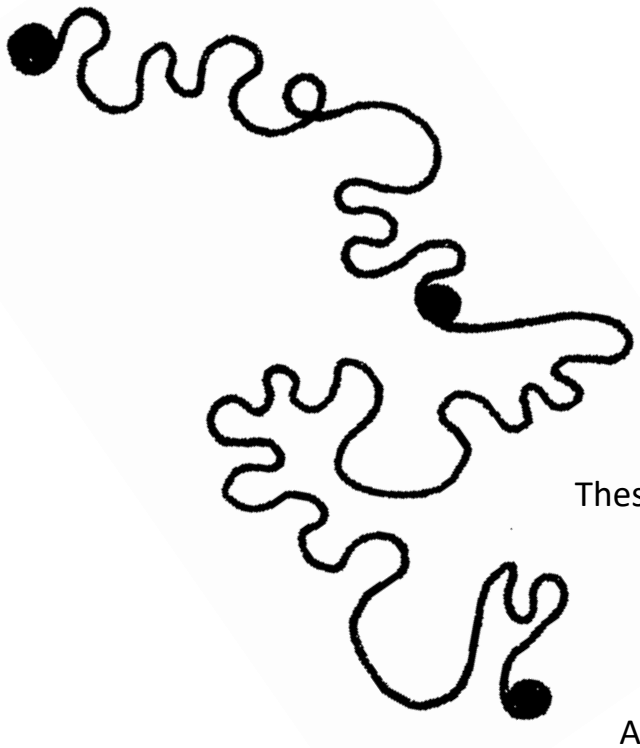
From Lesotho to Bulawayo to Kimberley

I was there, undoubtedly

Although play memories are so worthwhile

Her adult self recalls with a saddened smile





These women, you see, they used to use me a lot

But in adulthood play is so easily forgot

And adults, you know, they're too busy for me

And are often ruled by society

Once so prominent to their child selves

Now I'm like dust up on a shelf



Although some of them still use my ways

But more as a guiding player, let's say

Not as the main part of the game

It's different now, it's just not the same

Back in the days, back in their youth

They still do it I guess, but now there's the truth

Of adulthood creeping in from the sides

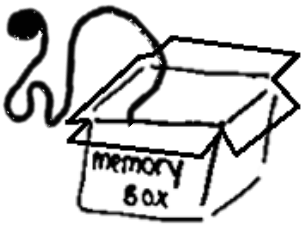
Stresses and gloom and shadows that guide

With children or learners teaching them how

Some still play

As adults now





So,

Inner child,

Girl,

Young Dame,

Lady, Miss or Mrs Name

Although you do play now and then

Can we play like way back when

Like in those memories that hold so dear

Let’s play like that

Let’s make them clear

I guess what I’m really trying to say

Is that I am here and I am Play



Play is weird and wonderfully strange

Play is a chord of musical exchange

Sometimes it’s there so flawless in sound

And sometimes it’s gone and cannot be found

Play is unique to you and to her

Play can be hard to define or transfer

Play is so much more than it seems

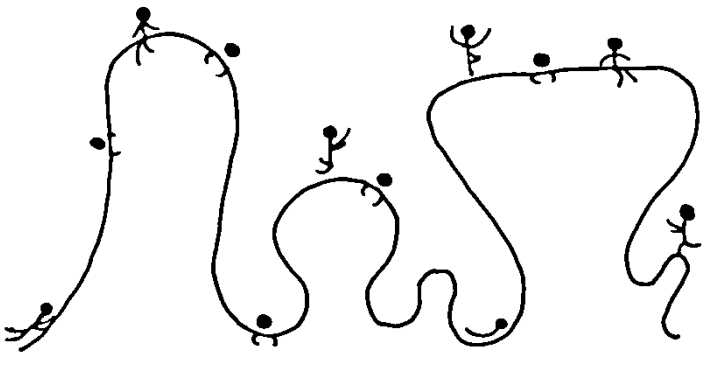
Sometimes just a moment alone or in teams

Play is play and can’t be compared

It’s hard to come by and so easily shared

Play is complex and yet so simple to do

Play is me, Play is you



Appendix G

Installation Voice of Play

Good day

Welcome

I haven't seen you in quite some time

Well hello there

Thank you for coming

There's a distant face

Do come in

Get comfortable

Take a look around

It is I, your friend Play

Oh, you know me

Remember when we used to play

Remember

Yes that game over there

Remember

Remember that time when

Play it

I dare you

Come on

Don't be shy

Just play

Oh look… colours

When was the last time you coloured in?

What's your favourite memory of play?

Where was it?

How old were you?

Imagine if you could play like that now

Here, now

Are you playing?

Come on

Play

Just today

With me

Play with me

Okay, I want to show you something

Something special

It's about you

And me

And play

It won't be long but you may want to find a chair

Can you see me

Are you ready?

Appendix H

Presentation-Installation













