Children and their underworld:
an exploration of young children's humour as Bakhtinian carnivalesque

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents findings from a small-scale qualitative study offering an alternative framing of children's humour and laughter in an early childhood education setting. The study employs a Bakhtinian carnivalesque lens to explore the nature of children's humour in an urban nursery and investigate the framing of children's humour and laughter outside the popular paradigm of developmental psychology. In addition, it addresses the challenge that children's humour can present for early childhood practitioners, turning to Bakhtin's analysis of carnival to frame children's humour as carnivalesque. This conception is then offered as a part of a potential explanation for practitioners not having an opportunity to understand children's humour, proposing that dominating, authoritative discourses within early childhood education play a significant role in this. The thesis draws on several theorists, including Bakhtin more widely, via a Dialogic methodology, to address reasons why humour is not valued, pedagogically, within the English early childhood field. Finally, the suggestion that it is profitable to view young children's humour in the context of Bakhtinian carnivalesque is offered, and a case for reframing young children's humour in an ECEC context as 'carnivality' is made.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

'If you laugh at something, you've won already'
Joan Rivers

Humour has been a subject of interest for thousands of years and has been debated ardently by prodigious thinkers, from Aristotle and Plato to Bergson and Freud (Raskin, 2008). Accordingly, it has been studied via a breadth of paradigmatic and philosophical angles. My profound interest in humour stems from childhood experiences of being surrounded by laughter and silliness; when humour began to have a principal role in my relationships with family and friends; the types of books, TV programmes and films I enjoyed; and, on reflection, in shaping my ability to cope with negative life experiences. My interest in children's humour developed prominence when I trained as an early childhood practitioner in the 1990s and began working with young children. I could not help but notice how very young children of 2 and 3 years old would laugh, wholeheartedly, at something that seemed to touch their 'sense of humour'. Prior to this, it had not crossed my mind to wonder, in any depth, about the nature of young children's humour and its likeness, or not, to that of adults. Working with very young babies pressed my interest further and raised questions about the provocations for their laughter, and whether laughter was always a genuine response to humour or, when I found an 18-month-old child climbing upon a table and they burst into fits of manic, almost desperate, giggles, whether those chuckles were prompted by something other than humour. At that time, I began to consider my own experiences of humour as a child and an adult and to question how important humour was in my life, and life generally, but particularly - as my academic interest most certainly focused around young children - how important, significant and prominent humour is in children's lives.

I began to search for literature that would help me answer the questions I had about children's humour and discovered a veritable dearth of literature on the subject. However, whilst on this search, I stumbled across Brodzinsky and Rightmeyer's suggestion that, '…the

study of humour, and the individual difference factors affecting this phenomenon, helps to fill a glaring gap in the current research on human behavioural development' (Brodzinsky and Rightmeyer, in McGhee 1980). At the time, I harboured an interest in child psychology and was fascinated by theories of cognitive development, which existed in abundance. Armed with a wealth of literature focused on developmental psychology, I embarked on my Master's degree and considered focusing the study upon the development of humour and affecting factors. As this would have meant following a path underpinned predominantly by developmental psychology (McGhee, 1989) I reasoned that, although children's humour should be the focus, a different approach was required given my background is not a purely psychological one. Consequently, I decided to explore the idea of the importance of humour and whether it warranted more attention within early years' practice. The topic experienced a period in the research spotlight, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s but, until recently, there has been a significant absence of new research. The need to conduct a small-scale exploratory study in this area, therefore, was palpable. It prompted me to begin the project, undertaken in the hope it could form even a small part of a resurgence of interest.

1.1 Why focus on children's humour in the context ECEC?

Of interest to me are the social implications of children's humour. Here, in the west, humour seems to hold a special place in people's collective heart and it has been conceptualised by sociologists as 'a form of spontaneous behaviour and expression of sub-cultural norms' which prompts, '…shared resistance to the social pressures and tensions created by the formal organisation of the wider environment (Linstead and Holdaway: 1999, xvii). This resonates with the social environment of English ECEC settings and is an idea that this study will probe and explore alongside the suggestion that the current picture of children's humour in early years' settings (EYS's) is, potentially, unhelpful: an idea stemming from my own experiences and from master's research. The inaccurate picture of children's humour may have been influenced by dominant social constructions of children and childhood, created because of early childhood practitioners' life experiences, and societal influences prevalent within ECEC. Social constructions of childhood are influential within early childhood training and introduced to students via the content of many courses (Nutbrown, 2013). Personal experience of being a student and lecturer says that the conceptions of the naturally developing child (Jenks and Prout, 1998) and of children as a 'tabula rasa', or blank slates (Jenks and Prout, 1998) are introduced on nationally accredited ECEC courses (Nutbrown,

2013). The notion of the naturally developing child emanates from the wealth of content within professional early childhood courses that focuses, in some way, on the theories of Piaget (Athey, 1976). The view of children as blank slates is introduced to students of early childhood as part of an historical overview of social constructions of childhood (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998) and, although this idea is generally not championed by teachers/lecturers, it is likely to resonate with many students' lived experiences and ideas about childhood formed as a result of a likely susceptibility to societal influences (1998). That this resonance occurs for students seems to make it more likely that ideas about children will be consolidated for them during their influential experiences of training to become ECEC professionals (Nutbrown, 2012) and therefore, more likely that the ideas will underpin students' beliefs about what constitutes desirable practice. This has ramifications for the plight of children's humour as a pedagogically significant and important consideration within the ECEC field.

1.2 A conflict within English ECEC between the notions of 'child as competent' and 'child as naturally developing'?

An apparent anomaly exists between the idea of the naturally developing child and child as blank slate and the championing of framing children as competent and as 'protagonists' (Edwards and Gandini, 2011) within ECEC professional courses (Nutbrown, 2013). It could be argued that the idea of children as competent and capable is unlikely to become a meaningful part of an ECEC practitioner's personal philosophy because it conflicts too strongly with notions of the naturally developing child and child as a blank slate so visible and influential within the ECEC professional training (Nutbrown, 2013).

1.3 The influence of a predominantly female workforce on early years' practice

The early years' workforce is predominantly female (Rodd, 2013). Gender and its influence upon practitioner perceptions of themselves and of children may be relevant, therefore, particularly if we accept Luke's supposition that children and women are grouped together because, in a paternalistic society, they are 'not men'. This reflects Nussbaum's arguments that 'unequal social and political circumstances give women unequal human capabilities' (2000:1). This prompts us to ask how these ideas may impact upon female ECEC practitioners' perception of their role and relationship with children. Moreover, this raises

questions over the potential effects of this on practitioners' perceptions of children's humour. For example, if practitioners are in the same 'group' as children they may have been afforded the impression that they have an affinity with them, and experience subsequent disequilibrium when children engage in humorous behaviours that they do not understand or cannot empathise with. Arguably this is a theme worth pursuing and therefore is addressed by this research.

1.4 Perceptions of children's humour within ECE

Following the line of thought put forward in this chapter, it can be argued that if children's humour-related behaviours fit within the realm of 'acceptable humour' and converge with the social constructions of children and childhood (as argued earlier in the chapter) then practitioners' expectations of children will not be challenged. This may result in practitioners experiencing a sense of equilibrium. Humour-related behaviours that sit within the realm of what may be perceived as 'challenging humour', however, potentially conflict with the social constructions of childhood illustrated earlier. If this were the case, these potential challenges to ECEC practitioner's view of 'a child' may create discord with practitioner's expectations of children, resulting in unmediated responses from practitioners towards children and, therefore, children receiving unsatisfactory support, or no support with this.

This study explores young children's humour by adopting an alternative approach to those that arguably dominate, currently: namely the Bakhtinian carnivalesque. Chapter two provides a discussion of the existing literature on children's humour and that addresses the issues raised, here. Chapter three explains the inextricably linked theoretical and methodological application of Bakhtinian theories, and discusses the ways in which they underpin this research. Chapter four presents the methodological approach and describes the research methods that are adopted within the study. Chapter five is an in-depth analysis of the data generated within this project; and chapter six engages the reader in a discussion of the findings and argues the implications they have for ECEC practice and future research. The next chapter begins with a review of the literature that stands before this research and finishes by introducing the study's guiding research questions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

At the heart of this research project lies the idea that all human beings possess a sense of humour. A wealth of literature exists spanning many centuries, outlining theories that claim to explain where our sense of humour originates and offering descriptions of its nature and role. The following chapter details salient aspects of this literature. It is important to note that this thesis is not concerned with identifying a *new* theory of humour; instead, it is concerned with attempting to understand the nature and role of children's humour, as well as perceptions of children's humour, within the context of an early childhood setting. Consequently, a comprehensive and exhaustive review of all relevant literature is beyond this study's scope. However, an overview of pertinent literature and ideas is offered to provide a sound base from which to conduct a more in-depth exploration of children's humour research.

Humour has been a topic of interest for scholars dating back to Aristotelian times. The following section briefly follows the course of humour studies, thematically not chronologically, to establish prominent discourses in humour research that relate to this study. From here, the chapter moves away from general humour research towards research focusing on the topic at the core of this study: young children's humour (with a focus on 3-5-year-olds). The notion of whether young children's humour research mirrors the course of general humour research with regards to underpinning theory is explored. Finally, the strong connection between humour and play is argued, leading into a proposal that adopting a Bakhtinian approach to children's humour could be advantageous for young children and the field of early childhood education.

2.2 Definitions of humour

The polysemic nature of humour (McGhee, 1989) may endure because '...humour differs from serious discourse in requiring at least a duality of meaning and often a multiplicity of opposing meanings' (Mulkay, 1988: 30). As a concept, humour has experienced a series of definition changes over time, evolving from a corporeal to a psychological, sociological, philosophical and anthropological phenomenon. One of the most primitive understandings of

humour (humores) was as bodily fluids. Hippocrates (400 BC) wrote that blood, mucus, and yellow and dark bile were integral for health and wellbeing (Schubert and Leschhorn, 2006). Later, in Medieval times the meaning of humour began to develop, and, possibly due to the common belief that the relative proportions of these 'humores' were inextricably linked with temperament, was a peculiar personality trait. The move toward a dynamic term, when a connection with the ability to connect with and delineate the comic became associated with humour, was instigated by Corbyn Morris in 1744. Morris offered a definition of humour as 'any remarkable Oddity or Foible belonging to a Person in real life' acknowledging that 'it gives more delight and pleasure than wit' (Morris, 1744).

Much of the current humour theory aligns with Mulkay's comments and affirms that a definitive meaning of the word is difficult to identify (McGhee, 1989; Monro, 1988). Moreover, most research into the development of humour focuses upon a broad definition of the word (McGhee, 1989; Monro, 1988). McGhee claims that at least since the era of Aristotle, if not before, philosophers have debated the 'nature and significance of humour' (McGhee, 1989: 1); and its ambiguous or ambivalent nature may have guided much of their discussion. McGhee also proffers that, although humour has been a source of conjecture and discussion for many years, it has not enjoyed popularity as a research topic and, even considering the increase of research interest in humour in the 1970s and 1980s, until the 2000s there were still relatively few studies on the nature and significance of children's humour (McGhee, 1989; Tallant, 2015).

2.3 Perspectives on and theories of humour

2.3.1 The influential presence of the psychology of humour within humour research

According to Loizou (2006), within the psychological discipline there are two key theoretical perspectives on humour: the 'psychoanalytic' and 'cognitive' (Loizou, 2006: 425). A particularly influential figure associated with the psychoanalytic theory is Freud (1928) and supporters of the perspective include Winnicott (1970); Levine (1980). Freud argues that jokes occur when the conscious permits thoughts stifled by society. He suggests the superego permits the ego to produce humour. A munificent superego sanctions a reassuring type of humour while an unsympathetic superego generates a scathing and sardonic type of humour. Freud stipulates that it is possible for the superego to banish humour all together (Freud, 1928) and, in later life, focused more on the notion that some people are not ever able to

appreciate or produce humour (McGhee, 1989; Bergen, 2002, 2016). As this study does not adopt a psychoanalytical stance it would seem prudent to refer to Freud's theory – a well-established and scrutinised theory of humour – to offer its essence without going into great detail. However, it would be remiss not to discuss some of the main elements of Freud's theory as they are supported by many theorists interested in children's humour including Wolfenstein (1954), Kris (1940) and even by McGhee (1979), despite his primary focus on developmental psychology. For McGhee, the elements of Freud's theory which suggest that humour can act as a coping mechanism, allowing us to deal with stress and anxiety more effectively, were of interest. Wolfenstein's (1954) theory stipulates that humour is a procedure that turns a negative experience (for example frustration or guilt when faced with all-powerful adults and the constraints they impose) into a positive one. The contents of humour over the course of childhood reflect the concerns which mark the successive steps of emotional development and which were at one time associated with worry or anxiety (Wolfenstein, 1954). Like Wolfenstein, Kris focuses on the links between humour and anxiety and argues that children get pleasure from 'the memory of an averted superfluous anxiety' (Kris, 1940: 209) and subsequently can produce humour from the sense of relief. Although, as previously mentioned, McGhee has been found to support aspects of Freud's psychoanalytic theory (1989), he has been one of the main proponents of the cognitive perspectives, supporters of which hold that, 'humour occurs when there is a restructuring of a pattern of elements' (Kuchner in Loizou, 2006: 425). Particularly, McGhee argues that humour occurs because of the appreciation of incongruity, and this work will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Attardo (1994) adds a third perspective or 'family' to Loizou's two: the 'social', as he suggests there are psychological theories of humour which do not sit happily under the cognitive or psychoanalytic umbrellas. He argues that the most well-known theories of humour fall into each of these three families, as seen in Fig i.

Cognitive	Social	Psychoanalytic
Incongruity	Hostility	Release
Contrast	Aggression	Sublimation
	Superiority	Liberation
	Triumph	Economy
	Derision	
	Disparagement	

Fig. 1

In the domain of psychology, and across a range of academic disciplines (Morreall, 2009) there are three groups of humour theories in sync with the cognitive, social and psychoanalytic perspectives and much of the literature reports these groups are the three main humour theories (Raskin, 2008). They are commonly known as the Incongruity Theories (with foundations in the Cognitive family); the Superiority Theories (with foundations in the Social family) and the Relief Theories (with foundations in the Psychoanalytic family) (Monro, 1988).

The 'Superiority Theories' have biblical origins and can be said to have begun with Plato, going on to dominate Western views of laughter for over 200 years (Morreall, 2009). They contend that we laugh *at* others because they have some failing or defect, or because they find themselves at a disadvantage in some way or suffer some small misfortune, and this allows us to feel superior: a response we find humour in. The theory is underpinned by the view that all humour is derisive. A more contemporary perspective of this theory is offered by Scruton (in Morreall, 2009b). He suggests that if someone is unhappy about being laughed at it is because of a perception that laughter communicates a devaluing of its object. Several humour researchers have, however, refused to accept the view that humorous incongruity involves degradation of something by linking it to something trivial or disreputable (Monro, 1988). This group of thinkers not only hold that incongruity is quite distinct from degradation, but insist that incongruity, not degradation, is the most essential feature of all humour: they subscribe to the 'Incongruity Theories'. McGhee proffers that '[t]here is almost total consensus among researchers that humour is related to comprehending (humour reaction) or producing (humour creation) an "incongruity" (McGhee, 1989:17). As previously identified, this does not lead to all researchers supporting the 'Incongruity Theories'. Some prefer to hold onto the premises of the two other prominent models (Raskin, 2008). Since humour often calls social conventions into question a third set of theories to arise, contesting the superiority theories (Morreall, 2009) and commonly known as the 'Relief Theories', maintains that humour affords us relief from the restraint of conforming to those requirements (Monro, 1988); Freud's psychoanalytic offerings being the main contribution to this set of theories. Morreall provides a helpful analogy offering strong imagery of the theories as 'an hydraulic explanation in which laughter does in the nervous system what a pressure-relief valve does in a steam boiler'. Freud's approach involved the analysis of three contexts for laughter: *der Witz or* 'joking'; the comic; and humour. Morreall explains that each of these situations involves laughter releasing nervous energy that built up

in anticipation of being needed for a psychological exercise but became surplus once when the exercise was discarded (Morreall, 2009). Relating to the three main theories outlined here, a close reading of the available literature suggests that studies of children's humour - adopting data-collection methods including observations, child consultations and case-studies - appear, for the most-part, to subscribe to the Incongruity Theories (Mcghee, 1989; Hobday-Kusch and McVittie, 2002; Loizou, 2005, 2006). This approach seems to fit effectively with the majority of empirical evidence regarding children's appreciation and expression of humour.

Clarke's (2008) evolutional psychology theory stems from one of the most recent studies into the significance of humour: the 'Pattern Recognition Theory'. His theory claims to provide a definitive explanation of humour. Clarke attempts to clarify how and why we find things funny. In addition, he claims to identify that the reason humour is common to all human societies is its fundamental role in the evolution of homo sapiens and its continuing importance in the development of infants. Clarke argues that underlying all forms of humour is a pattern, and it is the recognition of this pattern, which evokes a humorous response in us. He says that the content of humour is necessary, initially, but once that content has been accounted for, it is the recognition of the pattern that we turn to and which makes the humour meaningful (Clarke, 2008). Clarke recognises the significant link between cognitive and brain development and humour and suggests that humour 'is a process by which the child is being encouraged to repeat or hone specific neuronal activity' (Clarke, 2008: 61). Further, he argues that this process and the child's developing ability to recognise patterns, and therefore humour is to an extent essentially innate, although likely to be influenced through social interaction (2008). Significantly, in relation to the present study's focus on Bakhtinian subjectivity, Clarke stresses that '[p]attern recognition remains a subjective matter, just like any other perception' (Clarke, 2009, online). The idea of humour being subjective, generally, is one that bears careful consideration when analysing young children's humour expression as it may influence the way individual children engage with humour, as well as adult perceptions of this engagement.

Clarke's emphasis on the social aspects of humour supports Attardo's (1994) suggestion of a third 'family' of theories that supplements the psychoanalytic and cognitive families and promotes an aspect of humour that bridges the potential gap between mind/brain-based theories, and those that sit within alternative paradigms such as philosophy, sociology and

anthropology (Raskin, 2008). Moreover, this line of thinking leads us to consider the need to address the prolonged gap within children's humour literature that exists between psychological and alternative approaches to it.

2.3.2 The sociology of humour and its relevance to the ECEC context

Koller (1988) posits that there are five functions associated with humour. The first function, he argues, is *social bonding*. In this scenario children share their humour with other people and form bonds, a sense of worth and develop an identity as part of a group, enhancing their aptitude to communicate. Second to this, Koller suggests another function is as *relief from stress and strain*. He proffers that children require liberation from real and perceived constraints and adult expectations that can instigate anxiety and tension. The third social function of humour in Koller's typology is as a *celebration of life*. He proposes that humour has an important role in children's development of positive dispositions. The penultimate function, Koller suggests, focuses on the enjoyment children experience on discovering adults are fallible: a revelation that children's find empowering. The final function is of *provoking thought.* This theory suggests humour can rouse children's inquisitiveness, motivate them to embrace challenging tasks, and motivate them to engage in divergent thinking (ibid). Further, and significantly in the context of the present study, Lockyer argues that in analysing humour, seriously, we are not being 'anti-humour' or advocating that people should stop laughing. On the contrary, it is to argue that 'in its various communicative acts, humour forms a distinct modality of human interaction, universal in occurrence yet highly particular in how it operates and how it is sanctioned within different societies and different historical periods' (Lockyer, 2008: 809). This is an idea I will return to later in the thesis, due to its potential relevance to perceptions of humour and children's humour in an ECEC context, and how these relate to children's expression of and responses to humour.

2.4 Humour and laughter

In any thorough and rigorous study of children's humour it is essential to explore the links between humour and laughter: laughter being arguably the most familiar indication of humour appreciation (Provine, 1996). Smiling and laughter are often considered a direct

response to the appreciation of humour or finding something 'funny'. The synonymy of humour and laughter is well documented, and research highlights a strong link between the two (McGhee, 1989). However, also highlighted is the idea that they are not inextricably linked, and one can occur without the other (Chapman and Foot, 1980). Giles and Oxford's 1970s research maintains there are six types of laughter aside from humorous laughter: social, ignorance, anxiety, derision, apologetic and the phenomenon of tickling (Giles and Oxford, 1970 in Chapman and Foot, 1980). The suggestion that laughter is not always evoked by humour is an important factor to note when exploring children's production and appreciation of humour as it could be easy to misinterpret children's laughter. For researchers of children's humour, this insight is crucial. Giles and Oxford's study is not the only one worthy of note, here. More recently, Pinheiro et al.'s research into laughter involved looking at the attention gaining qualities of sudden and 'emotionally salient' vocalisations and concluded that 'vocal emotions may be differently processed based on task relevance and valence…[and]…[i]ncreased anticipation and attention to positive vocal cues (laughter) may reflect their high social relevance' (Pinheiro et al., 2017: 11). This adds weight to the notion that laughter has a largely social function (Attardo, 1994). Giles et al (1970) concede that these examples of laughter stimuli are not necessarily discrete, and that humorous laughter may be accompanied by some of the criteria identified above but most particularly, by social factors. This is supported by McGhee's (1979) suggestion that humour researchers, '…can only make an educated guess regarding humour perceptions on the basis of behavioural cues' (McGhee, 1979: 68).

2.5 Humour and child development: the origins of children's humour research

To date, several academics have focused on children's humour and how its development pattern tallies with other aspects of children's development (Raskin, 2008). These studies have predominantly excluded young children. The most significant scholar in the area of children's humour (with a focus on children from birth to 8 years old) is Paul McGhee (1979; 1980; 1989). With his roots in psychology, McGhee tenders that although we had learned much about the humour of adolescents in the years preceding 1988, in developmental terms we had learned very little as pre-school aged children were rarely, if ever, the subjects of humour research (McGhee, 1989). McGhee proceeded to conduct psychological investigations into the development of humour and its clear relationship with the path of many other areas of child development (McGhee, 1989). McGhee notes general agreements

amongst work with children that suggest, 'there is an important link between children's play and humour' (McGhee, 1989: 8) an idea strengthened through his study of children aged 3-5 years old. Shultz (in McGhee and Chapman, 1980) goes further, suggesting that imaginative play is particularly significant given that the development of humour relies upon children's ability to appreciate the symbolic but does not believe that children acquire this capability until around 7 years old. McGhee (1989) concurs with Shultz regarding the link between imagination and humour but adds that the presence of theory of mind is required (McGhee, 1980) for children to appreciate an incongruity, and most psychology scholars agree children acquire theory of mind at around 18 months old (Leslie, 1987). Pre-1980s, and the understanding that children as young as 18 months old are able to distinguish between pretense and reality, researchers assumed that children did not develop theory of mind and, therefore, a 'sense of humour' until much older (McGhee, 1980). This idea may have contributed to the lack of focus on young children within past humour research as scholars laboured under this potentially false belief.

As an outcome of his work with children, McGhee (1979) developed a theory centred within the Cognitive perspective and Incongruity Theories that mapped the development and appreciation of humour in children through four stages. Each of the four stages is based upon the development of cognitive abilities which enable the child to recognize and demonstrate cognitive incongruities. The four stages are as follows: Stage One: Incongruous Actions Towards Objects; Stage Two: Incongruous Labelling of Objects and Events; Stage Three: Conceptual Incongruity; Stage Four: Humour in Multiple Meanings – or the First Step toward Adult Humour (McGhee, 1979). McGhee's humour stages bear correlation with Piaget's (2007) stage model of child development in assuming that until children reach a certain point in their development, they are unable to appreciate or produce humour of particular forms. Pober (2008: 80) supports this, arguing that 'the typical sequence of humour and play development show a close relationship to the stages of cognitive development'. I argue that the dominance of Piagetian thinking in English ECEC (Canella, 1997; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 1999; MacNaughton, 2005; Grieshaber and McArdle, 2010; Rogers, 2011; Tallant 2015) and the link between Piaget's and McGhee's theories may have bearing on the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2012) Curriculum's only interest in humour being the development of understanding in relation to jokes, in children between 30 and 60 months old (Tallant, 2015).

The first of McGhee's stages begins at 18 months with the development of symbolic thought and therefore symbolic play. Further, amongst humour researchers, McGhee's developmental spectrum did not stand uncontested. As previously mentioned, unlike McGhee (1979), who argues that as soon as young children can perceive an incongruity in fantasy play (around eighteen months old) she finds humour in it, Shultz (1980) argues that the appreciation of incongruity humour relies upon a child's capability to discover an incongruity, understand it, and appreciate its resolution. He suggests that young children, although often able to comprehend the resolution of incongruity (or, are able find meaning in it), this does not contribute to their appreciation of humour until they are around seven or eight years old. He suggests that an incongruity is humorous to a young child because it does not make sense, not because it does not make sense in an unexpected way (McGhee on Shultz, 1979). Pien and Rothbart (1980) challenge both McGhee and Shultz and argue that humour may occur earlier than eighteen months old and suggest that 'the development of symbolic play capacities and fantasy assimilation are not necessary for the appreciation of incongruity humour' (Pien and Rothbart, 1980: 3). Instead, they suggest that children only need perceive an incongruity and interpret it playfully and that this can occur roughly at four months old (1980). The second of McGhee's stages states that 'incongruous labels for incongruous events may be combined with incongruous actions directed towards objects, or the child may create purely verbal incongruities'. This stage is epitomised by, 'the absence of action toward objects' and McGhee argues that within this stage, 'physical activity may occur, but it is not central... [and it is] [t]he verbal statement alone [that] creates incongruity and leads to laughter' (McGhee, 1979: 69). Further, he argues that it is in this stage that children develop their capability for abstract thought and that this is a definitive characteristic of the second stage.

McGhee's third stage involves the emergence of conceptual thought when children reach about 3 years old. They begin to understand that a word does not refer to a single object, but rather to a category of objects sharing common distinctive features that differentiate them from other objects. In this third stage, the child's mode of thought is based exclusively on the perceptual characteristics of objects or events, and this is in striking contrast to the fourth stage, which will be highlighted in a moment. Humour at this third stage is centred on incongruities related to appearance. In its verbal expression, it consists of the invention of nonsense words, enjoyment of rhymed sequences, and laughter when hearing words with

unexpected pronunciations, as though what was most important was the distortion of the 'physical' aspect of the word (i.e. its sound, and not its meaning). This aspect of stage three reflects the work of Chukovsky who writes of the pleasure children find in distorting reality through creating what he terms 'topsy-turvies' (Chukovsky, 1968). McGhee argues that it is not until Stage 4, at around 6 years old, that children' humour begins to be recognisable as adult humour. He argues that this stage is characterised by understanding of linguistic ambiguities. Although McGhee has his critics, these stages remain an accepted model for researching children's humour (Loizou, 2006).

2.6 Humour and early childhood education and care (ECEC)

The body of children's humour research appears to harbour a sizeable chronological gap between the activity of McGhee, Chapman and Foot, Shultz and others in the 1980s and the 2000s when the field became active again. During this hiatus, a relatively small number of journal articles and research projects, predominantly reiterating findings from earlier research, were reported but it was not until the new millennium that the field regained momentum. A number of themes frame the seminal studies and papers about the topics relevant to this study. The following section discusses them under the following ideas: developmental framings of children's humour in early childhood education and care; alternative framings of children's humour in early childhood education and care; Bakhtinian carnivalesque; pedagogical values in early childhood education and care: practitioner and curricular perspectives.

2.6.1 Recent developmental studies of humour within Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Cohen (2011) suggests that since at least 1997 a significant range of academics have expressed concern over the dominance of developmental discourses in early childhood education (Canella, 1997; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 1999; MacNaughton, 2005; Grieshaber and McArdle, 2010; Rogers, 2011; Tallant 2015): a significant reason for the present study adopting a focus outside this domain. It seems clear that this developmental theme, so dominant across the field, is reflected within the body of children's humour research: a good reason to adopt an alternative framing that explores children's humour from a fresh perspective. The following section offers an introduction to the more recent, key research in

the field of children' humour some of which follows the focus on developmental approaches and some within which the disciplinary boundaries are less defined.

Eleni Loizou (2004) conducted a study that explored ways that the environment in an ECEC setting can impact upon young children' experiences of humour and, subsequently, their development and learning. A range of qualitative data collection methods were employed including observations, interviews, research journals, video, and document review. The study focused on the capacity of the environment to contribute or detract from children's experiences of humour. Two prime themes emerged relating to the larger notion of environment. The first focused on curriculum and was manifest in: the underpinning philosophy of the baby room; interactions; activities, their makeup and situation; and materials and their purpose. Secondly, five behaviours in response to children's humorous actions were discovered within the caregiver role: directing, observing and making suggestions, active participation, initiation and verbal facilitation. Loizou reported that an adaptable, child-centred, play-based environment where playful practitioners can enrich children's experiences of humour are factors that can have a positive impact on young children' overall development and learning (2004).

Building upon the connection between humour and play, Loizou's (2005) next study explored the idea of young children's humour as a form of play. The study considered the impact of this conception on young children's learning and, in particular, their cognitive development. The study context was a university ECEC setting and a variety of qualitative data collection methods were utilised. The findings suggested that the occurrences of humour recorded happened when the children were involved in play scenarios. For example, some children were involved in playing with materials; others in playing with language; some children were engaged with imaginative play; and finally, a number of children were enjoying physical play. Loizou suggests these forms of play can be transformed into examples of humour because of the creativity demonstrated by the children during these activities. In addition, there was evidence of children transforming routine events into playful humour. Loizou (2005) argues that a range of socio-cognitive characteristics; for example, social interaction, creative thinking and metacognitive experience need to be considered when exploring the relationship between play, creativity and humour. A second study conducted in 2005 focused on how six infants in a group child care setting produced and appreciated humour. With the

use of multiple qualitative methods - participant and non-participant observations; journal writing; video; interviewing; and document review - this study looked at children's humour as indicated through their smiles and laughter. Findings suggest that there are two theories that best describe young children's humorous behaviour: The Theory of the Absurd and the Empowerment Theory. The Theory of the Absurd includes events that are out of the ordinary and violate children's existing schemata. It emphasizes the incongruity of an event through funny gestures or positions, the incongruous use of materials and actions. Empowerment Theory describes young children's ability to violate the expectations of their caregivers and use humour to empower themselves. It highlights a different form of incongruity which has to do with the violation of expectations, intentionally or otherwise.

Two years later, Loizou (2007) investigated the humorous activity of two infants, 18 and 21 months old, in their infant group childcare setting. This was a qualitative study that followed two infants for four months. Through participant and non-participant observations, journal writing and interviews, data were collected on children's involvement in humorous activity. The findings suggest that the two infants were involved in producing and appreciating incongruities as well as empowering themselves by violating the rules within their childcare setting. Simultaneously, there were distinct differences in the way they were involved in humorous events and personal and social knowledge. Reactions from caregivers also impacted their humorous behaviours. An individual profile was constructed for each child that highlighted their uniqueness and own way of regulating their social selves through the production and appreciation of humour.

Loizou's most recent qualitative study (2011) had two phases and explored the humorous aspects of humorous photographs young children took at school and home. The images were viewed through the lens of Loizou's 'theory of the absurd' and 'empowerment theory'. The study involved three boys and three girls between four and six years old. Phase one involved the children being offered a disposable camera and asked to photograph anything they considered humorous and made them laugh in their school and at home. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in which the children described their photographs and offered thoughts about why they were funny. Phase two took place six months later. During this phase the children returned to their humorous photographs and discussed them. Findings suggested that nursery children' own definitions of humour as seen in the photographs they

took can be framed by a framework comprising the two theories. Loizou reports that the children referred to incongruity, 'something out of the ordinary' which she describes as 'a cognitive process'. Further, the children demonstrated social agency via using relationships in their social circle to produce and appreciate humour. A final finding suggested that the use of a camera can usefully be thought of as a 'creative and empowering tool' that engages children in the research process more meaningfully.

Arguably Eleni Loizou has engaged in the most in-depth study of the field since the time McGhee was in full swing. However, she is not the only current children's humour researcher of note. Elena Hoicka has engaged in research that resonates with Loizou's but also offers new and different insights. Hoicka et al. (2008) investigated humour as a context for learning about conceptions of abstraction and disbelief. Parents were monitored whilst reading humorous and non-humorous books to their children. The study's findings suggest that humour dominates as a form of wrongness in books written for 1- to 2-year-olds and that it seems to invite the use of abstract words and imagery. Moreover, they found that parents offered more extra textual references whilst sharing humorous books with toddlers, and that this increased their exposure to 'high abstraction and belief-based language', arguably encouraging children towards the development of divergent thinking (Donaldson, 1978).

Following on from this work, Hoicka and Achtar (2011) investigated 30 and 36-month-old English speakers' capacity to construct jokes, comprehend there is a difference between humorous and sincere intentions, and distinguish between English- and foreign-language speakers. This was investigated via the children's engagement in two tasks. The first, the Giving Task, involved a researcher requesting one of two familiar objects and a partner always giving the wrong object. In the Naming task, the partner misnamed familiar objects. Under the English-speaking conditions, after doing something wrongly, the partner laughed (labelled as English-Humour) or said, 'There!' (labelled as English-Sincere). Under the Foreign conditions, the French- or Italian-speaking partner laughed (labelled as Foreign-Humour) or said, 'D'accord!' or 'Va bene!' (labelled as Foreign-Sincere). The children were then asked to pass and label the same objects to the researchers, followed by a new collection of familiar objects. The findings showed the children were significantly more likely to emulate 'doing the wrong thing' in the Humour versus Sincere conditions, and in the English versus Foreign conditions. This showed that children were more likely joke with those who offered humour, but this was particularly the case when the partner was English speaking.

The following year, Hoicka (2012) conducted another series of studies exploring young children's humour as 'a complex socio-cognitive phenomenon' by investigating 2 and 3-year-olds' humour production with their parents. She examined whether children produced original humour, whether they signalled their humour, and the types of humour engaged in. Forty-seven parents were interviewed, and filmed joking with their children. Other parents were asked to complete a survey. According to the parents' reports, the children copied jokes between 0-1 years and produce original jokes from 2 years. Three-year-olds produced predominantly original humour; 2-year-olds produced original and mimicked humour equally regularly. Also reported by parents was that children laugh, smile, and seek a reaction when they joke. During play, 2- and 3-year-olds engaged in these behaviours more when creating humorous versus non-humorous actions. In both the reports and play sessions, the children created original object-based (e.g., socks on hands) and conceptual humour (e.g., 'dog says miaow) and used incorrect labels for humorous effect (e.g., calling a cow a sheep). Hoicka concluded that both the reports from parents and the children's behaviour confirmed that young children create original humour and demonstrate the sharing of their own humour through smiles, laughs, and seeking a reaction.

As seen in the theory illustrated throughout this chapter, a large percentage of the research into young children's humour focuses on children over the age of 1 year. Vasuvedi Reddy's (2001) research focused on how the development of humour has largely neglected children aged 0-1 year and, specifically, humour production by these very young children. She carried out two longitudinal studies with parents of children aged between 7 and 11 months. The findings indicated, via interviews with the parents, that the children were said to make others laugh by repeating actions on purpose, so as to re-create the laughter that accompanied their actions the first time. The children's actions are likened to the activities of clowns, that showed numerous commonalities and 'developmental continuities'. Significantly, these findings suggest that the origins of humour may lie earlier in childhood than has been accepted up to now. Humour production, Reddy argues, can be seen in these types of engagements and can be seen therefore as part of an interactional as opposed to individual process. In addition, Reddy suggests that these findings indicate humour is an emotional process, as well as cognitive.

2.6.2 Alternative framings of humour in early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Cohen (2011) suggests a need for early childhood education to look beyond developmental discourses for theoretical frames that may help us to reimagine what we think we know about early childhood education. Aside from a relatively wide range of studies within the developmental domain, there exist a number of studies that adopt alternative approaches. As this study follows Cohen's advice in embracing an alternative approach, these studies are of particular relevance and are consequently discussed here.

Sutton-Smith and Abrams' (1978) research findings suggested that young children use names of sexual organs or bodily functions because they elicit humour for them; for example 'wee', 'poo', 'bum'. They found that this transformed somewhat once children reached aged 8 and over, at which time they preferred language and imagery that adults made clear they thought of as taboo, for example "cunts", "tits", and "eating shit". The use of profanities and scatological language is also documented elsewhere; for example, Katch (2007) whose data emphasises children's engagement with this language. She suggests that an explanation for young children's engagement with such language could be credited to the common appearance of such words and phrases; for example, in a variety of popular books and television programmes that children may encounter in their everyday lives. Cohen's (2011) research supports the presence of profanity in young children's communications, similar to those in Katch's study. She reports that some four-year-old children in her research used what they might perceive as socially offensive, scatological language in a mood of illicit festivity. Sutton Smith suggests that children's engagement with this type of language might be because they enjoy the experience of it creeping into the ECEC setting to trouble the status quo (Sutton Smith, 1998). Building on children's enjoyment and positive perception of potentially illicit behaviours as festive, Cohen argues that children and ECEC practitioners could benefit from the adults adopting a child's perspective; thereby viewing play as carnivalesque instead of succumbing to the strong inclination to frame play using more traditional lenses (Cohen, 2011). Adopting a 'child perspective' differs from what Sommer et al. call '*children's* perspectives'. They argue that the latter 'represent children's experiences, perceptions and understanding in their life world' (2010: 23), as opposed to a 'child perspective' that represents the more abstract concept of how adults 'think' children perceive the world (Sommer et al. 2010). This distinction between 'child' and 'children'' perspectives

is significant and will require attention when analysing children's experiences of humour and practitioner responses.

Studies of the types of books that young children read by choice have found that a primary factor is humour, particularly scatological humour. McKenzie suggests that children's habitation within an 'underground culture' where they can enjoy 'bawdy' humour has been a familiar idea for some time thanks to a substantial volume of popular folklore literature, and verbal rhymes and stories (McKenzie, 2005). The corporeality attached to the image of 'bawdy' humour, Klor argues, links to children's interest in the human body and that related humour manifests in the broadest, silliest ways involving silly words and sounds, incongruous actions and spoofs and that these are most likely to make young children laugh. This may be because these are situations that young children feel an affinity with and therefore expert in. This sits well with Klor's suggestion, that children enjoy situations where they feel they know more than adults because they are afforded so little control in their lives that any opportunity to correct an adult's mistake or tell them what to do is very welcome (Klor, 1991: 10). Further, the notion that young children's desire for peer recognition and social status, arguably as they facilitate opportunities to engage in performances with and for each other, might explain why these traditional themed collections have remained popular (Klor, 1991).

Building on McKenzie's idea that children have a fervent interest in scatological humour, Lambirth (2003) suggests that the pleasure children experience when engaging with this form of humour may, for some adults, evoke fear of the potential ramifications of children's interaction with themes of this nature. This has strong links with Sutton Smith's (1998) line of thinking, cited earlier in the chapter, that highlights children's interest in what they deem as illicit 'festive play', and resonates strongly with Bakhtinian carnivalesque imagery of carnival spaces as separate from officialdom: existing as a resistance to all that is official and consecrated (RHW). Captured here is support from the literature of the potential benefit to framing young children's humour as carnivalesque. This and the associated themes of subversion, resistance and separate spaces for children and adults should be noted and nestled behind the data collection and analysis processes selected when looking for evidence of a connection between children's humour and Bakhtinian carnivalesque.

2.6.3 A carnivalesque turn

Further to the earlier discussion of children's interest in 'bawdy', scatological humour, anecdotal evidence suggests that many adults are often baffled by young children's fascination with toilet humour. If we take children's interest at face-value, this bafflement may seem to make sense. However, McKenzie suggests that children's interest runs deeper than a surface enjoyment of scatological imagery, arguing that 'scatological humour inverts and subverts social order' and in this, 'the carnivalesque is at play' (McKenzie, 2005: 85). McKenzie describes how, in picture books that are classified as carnivalesque, paradoxical play is 'dialogic or double-voiced' because 'there is an interplay between the serious and the playful, the authoritative voice and the subversive voice' (McKenzie, 2005: 87). During carnival, children have permission to play with paradoxes that are perceived by some as constructing human experience: 'order/chaos; soul/body; serious/playful; good/evil; clean/unclean; control/freedom; adult/child' (McKenzie, 2005: 85). As McKenzie suggests, children's enjoyment of carnivalesque themes catechises the dominance of Piagetian developmentalism that drives ECEC policy (DfE, 2013) and, to an extent, pedagogy and practice in England (Dahlberg et al, 2006): a conception of children that limits adults and pushes them towards privileging young children's 'preoperational, transductive, egocentric reasoning'. Instead, carnivalesque ideas encourage children towards an involved ability to identify reversed and subverted spaces and 'all the imaginative possibilities that 'what if?' allows' (McKenzie, 2005: 85). Moreover, McKenzie tenders that 'the carnivalesque challenges children to think about the social order through the reversal of roles, and in the closure brought about by the ending of the carnival, an increased awareness of the social nature of being-in-the-world' (McKenzie, 2005: 91). This gives rise to the idea that children may inhabit two different 'settings' of life – one where they abide by the 'rules' and the other where they challenge and play with them. In this vein, as Lensmire suggests, imagining educational institutions, such as an early years' setting, as spaces that embody what Bakhtin terms 'the people's second life (RHW) may not be unreasonable, given they are often spaces in which children spend a large amount of time. However, he suggests that 'this stands in stark contrast…to the dominant conception' of educational institutions, like schools, in which they are 'imagined as preparing children…for the labor market' (Lensmire, 2011: 121). Moreover, schools and, by extension, early childhood settings, can be argued as being 'too serious – where serious points to that false and heavy sort of seriousness that Bakhtin was worried about, a seriousness that keeps us locked into dominant modes of thought and

feeling, trapped in damaging relations with each other and the world (Michelson, 1999). Following this, Lensmire (2011) provides a compelling argument as to why we should see carnival as having an intrinsic role in learning. He suggests, via a Dewian prespective, that 'in order to criticize and remake the world, children and youth and teachers will need to play (with ideas, with each other) in order to experience and imagine something better' (2011: 125). This call for practitioners to 'lighten up' is reinforced by McEvilly et al. (2017) who argue 'that preschool practitioners, as well as policy-makers and researchers, should critically reflect on the effects of taken-for-granted developmental discourses and move beyond thinking in terms of binaries such as […] 'education versus play' or 'structure versus freedom' (2017: 943).

Although not focusing directly on humour, Cohen (2011) drew on a Bakhtinian carnivalesque frame to conduct research in to the carnivalesque nature of children's role play. Some of her findings include references to young children's humour and suggested that 'children can resist unwanted structure and rules through pretending' (Cohen, 2011: 180). Likewise, it can be argued that children can achieve the same goal through engaging with carnivalesque laughter and humour that turns the world on its head and enables them to challenge social structures and hierarchies. In addition, she suggests that children explore and negotiate their standing in the social world through use of double-voiced speech, which Bakhtin argues is inherently carnivalesque, as two separate voices, offering different - sometimes conflicting – sentiments exit in one utterance (RHW). It is important to note the findings of Cohen's studies and consider them in relation to the findings this study produces. As Cohen (2011) suggests, there is a dearth of research that focuses on laughter in a play context and this is a situation the present study aims to remedy.

The work that comes closest to the focus of this research is that of Jayne White. Her PhD, a Bakhtinian analysis of assessment in a New Zealand ECEC setting and the subsequent role of toddler metaphorocity led her to make some interesting links between Bakhtinian carnivalesque and the humour displayed by one of the children in her study. She argues that a similar phenomenon to Bakhtinian carnivalesque exists in modern education settings and suggests that very young children are extremely capable of choosing to act within this context. Her doctoral study prompted her proposal that the role of the early childhood teacher in this 'underground culture' is to be a dialogic partner who recognizes their dual horizontal and vertical roles as both insider and outsider: appreciating humour with children but

expecting (and celebrating) the child's position within a distinct culture that necessarily resides outside officialdom. She suggests that in doing so, teachers will acquire a more profound appreciation of the important role of humour for children to play with hierarchical roles in contexts in which they are often afforded very little power. Furthermore, she argues that the teacher can appreciate the capacity of humour to be a form of social mobility and agency on the part of the child. These findings and suggestions segway into this research project and support the value of further research in the area. I argue that of particular value to children and ECEC practitioners, is research that continues the themes raised by White but goes deeper into the perspectives of children and practitioners, whilst also considering the place and influence of policy and authoritative discourses.

Other researchers, although not having carried out full-scale studies into children's humour, have commented on ideas relating to the nature of children's humour as sub-findings in their research. For example, Bariaud (1989) asserts that humour in early childhood settings inspires behaviour and dialogue that involves clowning, foolery, pulling faces, and 'eliciting paralinguistic imitation' (in Cohen, 2011: 192). Further, Duncan and Tarulli (2003:341) highlight the Bakhtinian notion of 'ideological becoming of a human being' and, as Cohen suggests, children can experience this through imaginative play. It seems fair to suggest that they might also experience it through carnivalesque humour. The final study to be explored in this section was conducted by DaSilver Iddings and McCafferty (2007). This work offers a positive carnivalesque analysis of children's 'off-task' behaviours in a language classroom. The study's findings suggested that the context provided children with an opportunity to transform activities, presenting opportunities for growth. DeSilver et al. suggest that 'carnival is not simply the spontaneous world of child's play. It is rather fundamentally a form of rejuvenation achieved through the playful mocking of the hierarchical order by individuals who find themselves oppressed by it' (2007: 31) and that 'it…needs to be recognised that, in general, children have a natural affinity for carnival, in the case of resisting unwanted impositions through playful means' (2007:32). DaSilver Iddings and McCafferty (2007) argue that carnivalesque rebellion is not predominantly fuelled by anger, for Bakhtin but 'most saliently, one of satire, critique, and ultimately, play' (2007:33). The notion of 'critique' characterising the rebellion of carnival fits with the idea that children are attempting to make sense of the world around them and, as part of that, critique is necessary.

The range of ideas expressed here concerning researchers' forays into alternative understandings of children's appreciation and production of humour, highlight a potential gap in the literature. Much is offered in relation to young children's experiences, perceptions and perspectives within these studies, but less attention is paid to the perspectives of adults/practitioners. Gaining practitioner insights on children's humour and humour, generally, could be a useful way of exploring potential reasons why young children's humour does not enjoy high pedagogical status within ECEC practice and policy in England. This, despite the evidence to suggest its significance and importance in their lives. Another possible area for exploration in relation to this are the values held by early childhood practitioners that drive, influence and inspire their practice. This study looks to gain practitioner perspectives and underpinning values and, consequently, the next section offers an overview of existing research in this area.

2.7 Values in English ECEC policy and practice: a setting for humour?

It can be argued that early childhood curricula are underpinned, primarily, by a set of shared values (Faulkner and Coates, 2013). Further, the pedagogies adhered to by ECEC professionals are predominantly determined by firstly, the values of the curriculum; and secondly, professional perspectives on what is important for young children. We cannot take for granted that the two will reflect or complement one another so, when considering the place of children's humour in the field, it is important to note that both policy and practice will be of influence.

ECEC in England is driven by a number of curricular values that give the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) its structure. It has four over-arching principles: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development; and within those are sub themes known as prime and specific areas of learning and development (DfE, 2013). Significant to this study is that some sections of the EYFS focus on areas that link closely to humour but, for the most part, do not refer to it explicitly. Further, out of the 28 OECD countries, of which 18 have national guidance for early childhood education, only 3 refer to humour: England, Norway and Ireland (Tallant, 2015). While humour is mentioned by these three countries, none of the references to it go into detail. Within the English non-statutory EYFS statutory guidance and Foundation Stage Profile documentation (2017) there

is no mention of humour. The sole mention of humour in the EYFS curriculum is advice provided in the 'Communication and Language: Understanding' section. It states that between 40-60 months a child '[r]esponds to instructions involving a two-part sequence…[and]…[u]nderstands humour, e.g. nonsense rhymes, jokes' (DfE, 2017). The Norwegian 'Barnehage' guidelines (2017) offer the broadest consideration of humour, including it in a section relating to play, creativity and environment. It states that '[k]indergartens shall offer children an environment that is characterised by joy, humour, creativity and consideration for the group' (2017: 27) pointing out that '[p]lay, aesthetic activities, humour and creativity are phenomena that are linked to one another' (2017: 28). The guidance stipulates that 'for the youngest children, humour is primarily based on the body, and is developed through interaction between the children, finally stressing that '[j]oy, humour and aesthetic experiences must be important parts of children's existence at kindergartens' (2017: 30). In a similar vein, Ireland's 'Aistear' curriculum states in its 'Guidelines for Good Practice' that humour is part of the 'enjoyable' characteristic of play, suggesting that play 'is fun and exciting, and involves a sense of humour' (2017: 53).

Continuing the discussion of the relationship of the EYFS's (2013) underpinning values with the place of children's humour in English ECEC, Belsky et al. (2007) and Schweinhart et al. (2005) suggest that investing in sufficiently qualified staff to look after and meet the learning needs of young children is becoming fundamental in this country: an idea also reflected within the longitudinal Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study (Sylva et al. 2010) and further supported by Nutbrown, post Nutbrown Review (2013). These findings support the argument that well-qualified staff may be more confident about how to meet the EYFS requirements and, therefore, better equipped to think 'outside of the box' presented by the curriculum. Moreover, a capacity to 'think outside of the box' could suggest a capacity to consider children's potential needs, such as an engagement with and nurturing of humour, that do not necessarily fall within the EYFS guidance. Consequently, it will be important to consider qualifications when working with the PRs in this study and to gain their perspectives on this.

Once early years settings are satisfied with the qualification levels of their staff, Faulkner and Coates (2013) suggest that another widespread value – developmentally appropriate practice - may become a focus. This has potential bearing on practitioner perceptions of what is developmentally appropriate for young children. Given the earlier discussion of the potential

jarring between adults' held discourses of young children as innocent and naturally developing (Taylor, 2015), and children's enjoyment of carnivalesque humour that involves scatology and subversion, I argue that how practitioners frame 'developmentally appropriate' is significant when considering their contentment (or not) of children's engagement with particular forms of humour.

The OECD state that involving parents and communities in ECEC and providing high quality experiences for young children have become increasingly important within the English ECEC field, as laid down in the report 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years' (OECD, 2017). In addition, Wood (2010) suggests a debate existed (and anecdotal evidence suggests that arguably one still does) surrounding the meaning and value of play for young children and the relationship between play and learning; whilst the notion that children's physical, intellectual, social and emotional wellbeing benefit from children's experiences of play, are no longer questioned. With play seemingly having been a driving factor in the English ECEC system for some years, Faulkner and Coates (2013) argue that the field has 'fought to sustain a view of the individual child which positively values any knowledge, skills and attributes which can be identified through observation, rather than itemising, negatively, those skills and areas of knowledge which a child has not yet achieved'. I argue that the idea that these values and the shift away from deficit models they represent is an area that can be explored in this study as relevant to the role and value of humour within ECEC. This is particularly important with regards to perceptions of humour as trivial and as in opposition to seriousness, that have been referred to throughout this chapter and threaten to affect whether children's humour is valued in early childhood pedagogy.

A practitioner voice enters Faulkner and Coates (2013) paper, providing an opportunity to reflect upon a practitioner perspective on the values that underpin ECEC in England, before gaining the views of the PRs in this study. In Faulkner and Coates' research, a focus group of ECEC practitioners agreed that the values and principles of the EYFS are akin to 'common sense' which suggests that those practitioners share many, if not all, of those values. Further, the concept of assessment made an appearance in the interviews with the practitioners, leading to the authors' supposition that '[m]ost pre-school practitioners value assessment activities as an integral part of their daily support for learning' (ibid). This insinuation has potential relevance to the present study in that, if accurate, it has ramifications for humour's place within ECEC pedagogy: humour being non-quantifiable or measurable in a similar way

to play. Encouragingly, play, over recent years, has undergone a metamorphosis in terms of its significance and status in early childhood pedagogy (Wood, 2007) which bodes well for the prospects of humour in this context. Lastly, another of Faulkner and Coates' findings arguably worthy of note, was that practitioners with more experience confessed to needing to try and reconcile what they viewed as the 'current statutory requirements' with their own core beliefs and values as, at times, they were somewhat dichotomous; hinting at the potential for the practitioners in this study to harbour similar concerns.

This study is looking to highlight the struggle for humour to be seen as a legitimate and valuable aspect of children's experiences in ECEC settings. Consequently, it is useful to note that an examination of early education policies by Heckman and Kautz (2012) revealed that 'soft skills' involving character traits such as openness, conscientiousness and diligence are frequently neglected, despite being valued within education settings. In line with an argument made in the previous paragraph, they suggest this might be due to the curricula valuing standardised testing so highly and that 'soft' skills are unquantifiable. Further, they argue that this is potentially negative for young children, given the important place of soft skills within learning and development. They advocate that programmes overtly attending to soft skills should have a significant role in the creation of policy in the sector (Heckman and Kautz, 2012). Significantly for this study, I argue that humour may not even fall under the category of 'soft skills' in a policy context, as it is positioned more as a personality quality than a skill (soft or not). Subsequently, the idea that soft skills are not considered within EY curricula in any profound sense, coupled with the notion that humour may not even enjoy 'skill' status, is a potential explanation for the lack of attention to humour within a wide range of early years' curricula globally (Tallant, 2015).

2.8 A new contribution to the field of children's humour research in the context of ECEC settings.

We have seen throughout this chapter that a developmental paradigm dominates the field of humour research (White 2009; Tallant 2015). This suggests a gap in the current academic literature of research that frames young children's humour outside developmental discourses and seeks to address its position within ECEC policy and practice. I argue that it is important

for this gap in the research to be addressed if the significance of young children's humour is to become a focus in our field.

Reflecting on several years of working with young children, the collection of memories I have of their humour is not explained adequately by current theories. Each theory appears to have elements that resonate, but none seem to encapsulate the breadth of children's humour production and appreciation. The principal theories highlight children's appreciation of incongruity (McGhee, 1980) as well as absurdity and empowerment (Loizou, 2005). These concepts undoubtedly reflect young children's engagement with humour, yet the humour of children seems to be much more complex and nuanced, going beyond an enjoyment of playing with ideas that are nonsensical or absurd or that afford them a sense of mastery or empowerment. This study sought to address this dimension of complexity and nuance using a conceptualisation of medieval folk-humour: Bakhtinian carnivalesque.

While less well-known in early childhood research, further support for use of carnivalesque theory to frame young children's humour comes from anecdotal evidence suggesting that practitioners in ECEC find children's enjoyment of scatological humour, amongst other aspects of their humour, challenging, baffling or, at best, something they tolerate and attempt to avoid encouraging. Perhaps this is due to tensions between children's perplexing interest in socially-distasteful or nonsensical imagery, and dominant constructions of childhood that inhabit early childhood settings: Piaget's 'naturally developing' child, and Rousseau's 'innocent child' (Taylor, 2015). The strong developmental undercurrent of Western ECEC (Dahlberg et al, 2006; McNaughton, 2005) is influenced by the Piagetian notion of children developing in stages and, although new research (Taylor, 2015) has quashed the suggestion that the stages are distinct and unmovable, the powerful image of children's development moving up through set stages continues to cast a long shadow. As ECEC professionals, we may articulate the Reggio Emilia values of viewing children as strong, rich and capable (Edwards and Gandini, 2011) but the image of the child as vulnerable, innocent (Taylor, 2015), human becomings (Qvortrup, 2009) is powerful and has proven difficult to move away from. Consequently, if these constructions of the child do influence our thinking (knowingly or not) within the ECEC field, any behaviour that children engage in (humorous or not) that clashes with the image of innocence or natural development may be viewed as problematic. In turn, this may cause practitioners to position children's behaviour along a continuum, with Apollonian 'angelic' behaviour at one end and Dionysian 'devil-like'

behaviour at the other. The diagram, below, (Fig 2) outlines this continuum along with the underpinning theoretical approaches.
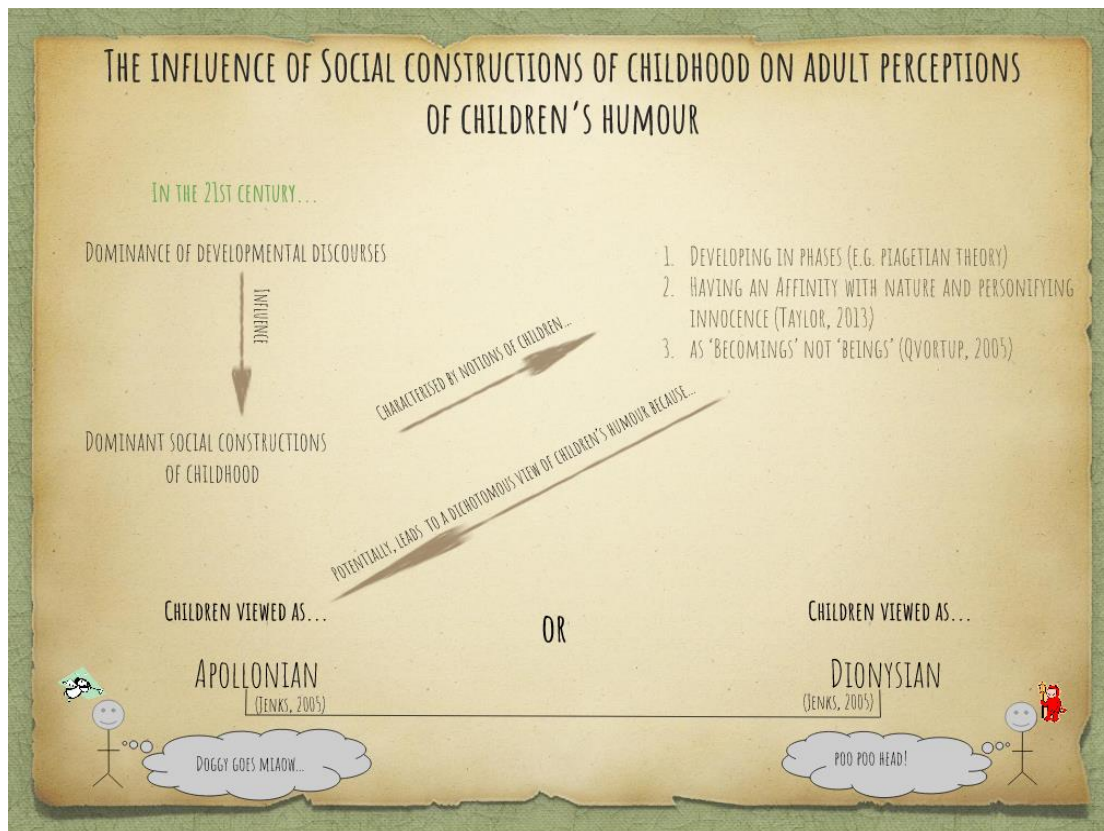
Fig 2

Founded on experiences of working in early years settings, relevant literature and original data (Tallant, 2015), I argue that early years practice consists of two separate realms: the routine realm and the challenging realm (see Fig 3). Further, the data suggests that children's utterances and actions that fit with early childhood practitioners' dominant constructions of childhood, sit within the routine realm. Such constructions are visible as Rousseauian and Froebelian conceptions of innocence (Taylor, 2015) and Piaget's emphasis on natural development (ibid). As long as children's behaviour is harmonized with these images of innocence and order, practitioners' equilibrium is maintained.
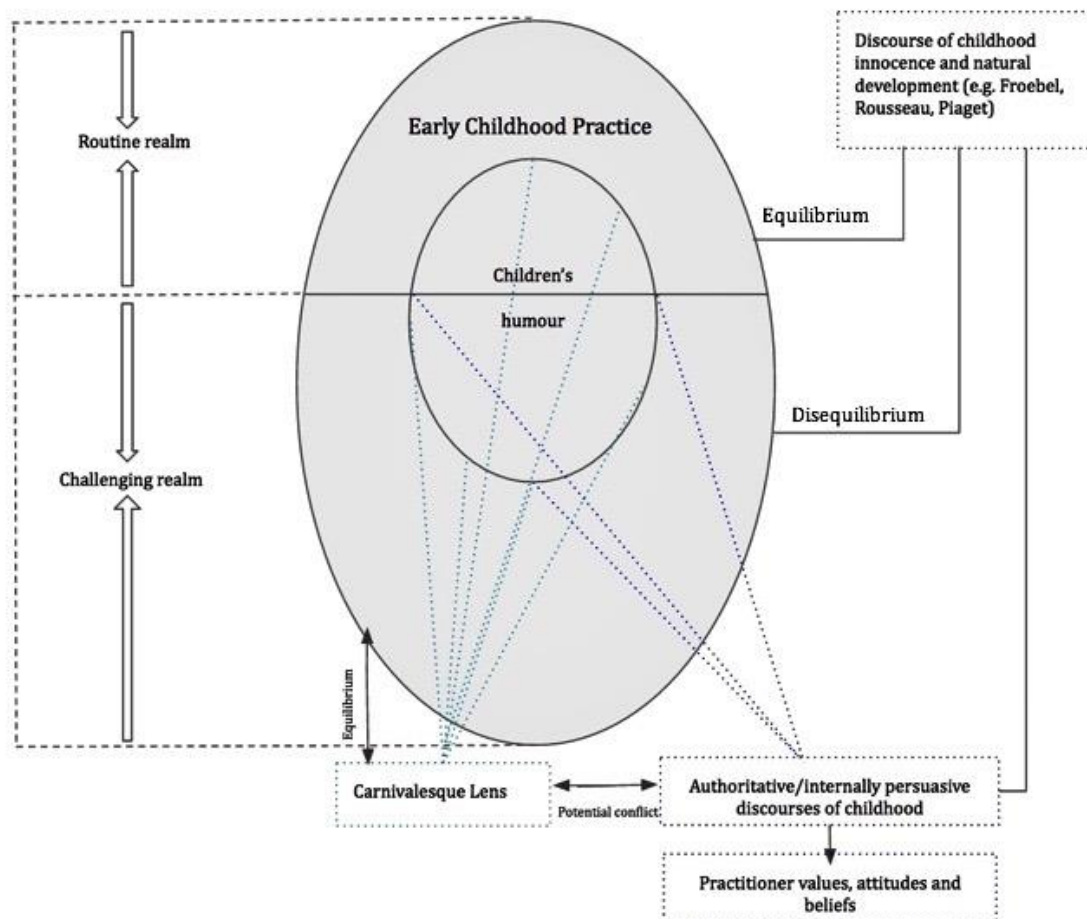
Fig 3

In contrast, anything children say or do that jars with practitioners' held constructions instigates dissonance between their view of the innocent and naturally developing child, and the behaviour they see children engaging in that cannot easily be categorized as innocent and does not necessarily reflect predicted stages of development (Tallant, 2015). These behaviours appear, for the most part, to fall into the challenging realm. It is possible that although numerous aspects of children's carnivalesque humour fall into the challenging realm, it may not be exclusive. In the nuanced social world that we inhabit it seems reasonable to suggest that some examples of children's humour may be perceived as only partially subversive or challenging, or even not at all. Consequently, this study aims to explore expressions of carnivalesque humour that fall into either category (routine or challenging) to frame and explore young children's humour as Bakhtinian carnivalesque. In doing so, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are young children's manifestations and perceptions of and reactions to humour within an early years setting, from a child, practitioner and Bakhtinian perspective?

2. What is a Bakhtinian interpretation of adults' experiences and perceptions of humour inside and outside of an early years setting, and how do these relate to those of young children's?

3. How do these experiences and perceptions, interpreted in this way, relate to the pedagogical significance of humour within an early years setting?

4. What are the implications of interpreting young children's humour and perceptions of young children's humour through a Bakhtinian lens, for early childhood education?

These questions take up and extend White's argument that there is a gap in educational research that has endeavoured to introduce Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque as a 'genre of resistance' (2009: 61). She emphasizes that this theme is often highlighted by Bakhtinian scholars, suggesting it is an area worthy of research in the field of ECEC. Since 2009 a limited number of studies (including White's doctorate) have explored this concept (see Cohen, 2011; Oksnes, 2008; Da Silva Iddings and McAfferty, 2007). By highlighting and focusing on the paradigmatic quality of carnivalesque in ECEC, this study aims to contribute to the field, in part, by addressing the capacity of carnivalesque to involve generic resistance.

Chapter 3

Theoretical and methodological foundations: Bakhtinian dialogism and carnivalesque

3.1 Humour, laughter and Bakhtinian carnivalesque: drivers of a theoretical framework

Throughout history there have been many attempts to create a universal theory of humour: one that explains categorically the existence and nature of the phenomenon. As yet, this feat has been elusive and instead there exists a body of ideas each of which seems to fit into one of three dominant groups: the incongruity theories; the superiority theories and the relief theories. One theory, which is noteworthy within the field yet defies categorisation in this way, is Bakhtin's theory of the Carnivalesque, based upon his analysis of the works of 17th century author, Rabelais. Bakhtin's theory places humour in an historical and literary context and draws upon the prominence of carnivals and carnival imagery within Rabelais' writing, transforming the carnival from a single event into a semiotic cultural code. Bakhtin believed that the popular tradition of carnival carried a specific wisdom that can be traced to the ancient world. For Bakhtin, carnival and carnivalesque create an 'alternative social space', comprising freedom, equality and abundance. Hirschkop assists our understanding of Bakhtin's perspective arguing that 'Carnivalesque works, in Bakhtin's parlance, use motifs, themes and generic forms drawn from a tradition of subversive medieval popular culture, a tradition linked to a very specific festive practice and to the significance of the body in medieval and Renaissance culture' (Hirschkop, 1989: 3). Linked closely to the subversion Hirschkop refers to, humour is the language of the carnival through which many carnivalesque features are expressed (RHW).

On discovering Bakhtinian Carnivalesque's potential to reframe young children's humour, the need not to discount his philosophical beginnings became clear, and that the significant influence of German Idealism, Neo-Kantianism and phenomenology on his later works (Eskin, 2000) needed to be noted. In addition, philologist David Shepherd (in Matusov, 2007: 216) stresses that his issue with Education scholars appropriating Bakhtin's work is not,

'...that Bakhtinian concepts cannot or should not be ''applied'' to real-life problems...' He warns, however, that '*…unless we try to understand how Bakhtin came to assemble his potent analytical instruments, we cannot achieve more than an approximate calibration of their true usefulness, and their application may become somewhat mechanical and unsubtle'*.

With this in mind, there is a need for a thorough, comprehensive application of Bakhtin's ideas if they are not to be misappropriated. Consequently, I argue that the apposite methodological approach for this project is dialogic; utilising Bakhtinian theory throughout the thesis to underpin the conceptual, theoretical and analytical framework. Consequently, from this point on, this chapter focuses on the ways in which Bakhtinian dialogism lies at the heart of this thesis: from its carnivalesque-focused theoretical framework to the guiding dialogic methodology.

3.1.1 The origins of Bakhtinian carnivalesque

In 'Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics' Bakhtin coins the term 'carnivalistic literature', meaning any genre of literature that involves a carnival sense of the world. He goes on to suggest that we might consider (albeit crudely) carnivalistic literature to be one of three roots of the novelistic genre; the other two being the epic and the rhetorical. This suggestion seems to provoke Bakhtin into a more thorough investigation of the notion of carnival and carnivalesque, as found in Dostoyevsky's work, and its varieties, the roots of which he suggests are to be found in ancient and classical antiquarian literature.

3.1.2 Carnival, the Socratic Dialogue and Menippean satire

The Socratic dialogues were authored by numerous ancient philosophers; however, only those of Plato and Xenophon have survived intact. The genre began as an oral tradition that, over time, developed into a literary genre comprising accounts of real conversations that Socrates had engaged in, and records of recollected conversations, both framed within a story. As the literary genre developed it acquired a freedom from historical accuracy or even from accounts of Socrates own words or ideas, retaining only his method of discovering truth via dialogue, encapsulated within story-form and burgeoning into a tremendously creative genre. The Socratic dialogue, a non-rhetorical genre, was pervasive at the time of its creation, forming part of Bakhtin's genre of 'carnivalistic literature', in the sense that it grew out of a

'folk-carnivalistic base' (Elliot, 1999) and was 'thoroughly saturated with a carnival sense of the world'. This 'sense', Bakhtin informs us, was brought to life through the two 'basic devices' of the Socratic dialogue: syncrisis and anacrisis. Syncrisis meaning the 'juxtaposition of various points of view on a specific object' and anacrisis, as a, 'means for eliciting and provoking the words of one's interlocutor, forcing him to express his opinion and express it thoroughly' (PDP:110). Both syncrisis and anacrisis have a, 'narrow, abstractly rhetorical character' but, for Bakhtin, this is tempered when they appear in the carnivalised genre of the Socratic Dialogue: giving a hint of the power that Bakhtin argues carnivalistic genres have. As the Socratic dialogue genre moved on, primarily through the writings of Plato, Bakhtin argued it began to lose its carnival sense of the world as it was transformed from a dialogic means of discovering truth into a monologic rhetoric espousing ready-made truths for the purpose of 'teaching' novices, rendering it void of possibility and openness. This monologization (Morson and Emerson, 1990) of the Socratic dialogue had the effect of turning 'dialogue into an empty form and a lifeless interaction' (Morson and Emerson, 1990: 57) which could be regarded as the antithesis of carnivalesque. Arguably, it was this paradigm shift in the genre that ignited Bakhtin's interest in and novel approach to the theory of carnivalesque and its driving force: humour.

3.1.3 A Dostoevskian spark

A catalyst for Bakhtin's fervent interest in carnival and the carnivalesque was the novelist, Fyodor Dostoevsky as Bakhtin sees a number of Dostoevsky's novels as embodying the spirit of carnivalesque. That Dostoevsky really does embody the carnivalesque in this way is questioned, however. Wellek, for example, suggests, 'Bakhtin himself says that "Carnival belongs to the whole people; it liberates from fear, brings the world close to man and man to his fellow man" (214)' yet '[a]lmost nothing in Dostoevsky implies a collective rapture or resembles the "joyous relativity" (166) Bakhtin finds in the "carnivalesque." (Wellek, 1980: 37). Wellek continues to describe how Bakhtin, '…ignores the deep seriousness, the sombre colors of a Dostoevsky novel, even if we grant that there is a bright Utopian hope at the end of the rainbow'. The affirmation, for Wellek, of Bakhtin's misunderstanding of Dostoevsky's relationship with the carnivalesque is that, '…there is nothing in Dostoevsky of Rabelais' corporality, of the lust for life in the ancient saturnalia or the commedia dell'arte. In every way Dostoevsky seems to me to represent the opposite of the carnivalesque spirit" (Wellek, 1980: 37). Whether or not Bakhtin's alignment of Dostevsky with the carnivalesque is

accurate, there appears to exist for him an inextricable connection between Dostoevsky and his broader theory of dialogism – another reason for bringing together Bakhtin's ideas and discussing them here, collectively. Dialogism refers to Bakhtin's comprehensive epistemological and ontological theory at the heart of which is his understanding of dialogue and intersubjectivity being at the root of meaning (DI). The details of this theory are discussed further later in this chapter with connections made between the dialogic concepts that merge under Bakhtin's umbrella of dialogism and the methodological approach adopted within this study.

3.1.4 Mikhail Bakhtin's underworld

Mikhail Bakhtin was, arguably, one of the most significant scholars of discourse in the 1900s (Holquist, 2002). A central Soviet thinker in the social sciences, his work has considerable importance regarding ideas of political resistance (Robinson, 2011). Working under the restrictive Stalinist regime (1922-1953), Bakhtin was a controversial character whose life in many ways reflected the subversive and resistant themes of his theory of carnivalesque: themes that will be returned to and explored in more detail throughout the chapter. His controversialist status can be seen in many aspects of his life story and academic works but, also, in his lack of certainty over the scholarly labels used to define him and his writing. Clark and Holquist (1984) claim that he felt most comfortable being described as a 'philosophical anthropologist' and these disciplines can be seen across his body of work but, arguably, most clearly within his study of Rabelais and carnivalesque humour. His academic career began studying at Petrograd University where he encountered a man who had one of the biggest influences on his thinking: Faddei Zelinsky, a Professor of classical philology. Zelinski's influence on the genesis of Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque is significant to this study because both harboured views that resonate with what were to become central themes in Bakhtin's carnivalesque theory. Drawn from his study of Renaissance author, Rabelais, these themes were the 'potential of the folk for undermining the heaviness and dogmatism of high culture…[a]nd Zelinsky's proclamation of the revivifying role of humor in the satyr play' (Clarke and Holquist, 1984: 31). 'Satyr' (or, satire) was an interest of Bakhtin's and Zelinsky's emphasis on humour's role within it probably acted as a catalyst for the inauguration of Bakhtinian carnivalesque (Clarke and Holquist, 1984).

Denied his doctorate due to the contentious nature of his study on Rabelais, Bakhtin was condemned to 'internal exile' in Kazakhstan amidst Stalin's 'purges' (Robinson, 2011): 'official' reasons citing his clandestine Russian Orthodox beliefs, but it is thought more likely that his scholarly publications were seen as a threat to the establishment (Emerson, 2000). This is supported by the fact that Bakhtin and a select group of Russian thinkers including Valentin Voloshinov and, later, Pavel Medvedev formed a group, now known as 'The Bakhtin Circle'. They met in secret, often in members' homes, and addressed cultural and social issues surrounding Stalin's regime and the Russian Revolution. The Circle 'developed a body of work which purported to describe an already democratised language, one which was, 'dialogical', 'heteroglottic', [and] at its better moments even 'carnivalesque'; (Hirschkop, 1989: 2). They focused on an examination of the clashes between social groups conveyed by language (Brandist, no date) and outward facing agendas coupled with hidden messages: ideas that had a significant influence on the Bakhtin and, subsequently, is a theme threaded through much of his work and, arguably, a significant indication of Bakhtin's preoccupation with types of power; such as those wielded by the Stalinists (Emerson, 2000). Additionally, and significantly given the focus on corporeality throughout his work, Bakhtin had a disability for much of his life. His right leg was amputated in 1938 after he had suffered for years with the bone disease, osteomyelitis. He does not write specifically about disability issues; however, his concern with embodiment is apparent, particularly in his theory of carnivalesque (Robinson, 2011). This theme of embodiment, I argue, fits well with the physicality of young children's humour (McGhee, 1989) and informed the adoption of Bakhtinian carnivalesque as a lens through which to investigate young children's humour in the context of ECEC. This is discussed in more detail throughout this chapter, starting with an exploration of the roots, evolution of, and main themes within Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque, followed by a foray into his broader epistemological and ontological theory of dialogism and a discussion of how it guides the methodology of this research.

3.1.5 Bakhtin's own carnival

It has been suggested the way Bakhtin writes 'reflects the spirit of carnival'…in that 'it defies systematic explanation' (Elliot, 1999: 129). Consequently, for clarity of understanding it is useful to secure any 'mobile terms enough to indicate the main elements of carnival and their relationship to discourse' (Elliot, 1999: 130). Elliot argues that by presenting his investigations in 'laughter, ambivalence and becoming, Bakhtin emphasises the dynamic

movement underlying 'unofficial language' (Elliot 1999: 130). This sense of movement can also be found in manifestations of Bakhtinian carnival imagery that subvert, highlight human relationships and are ambivalent (Elliot 1999): all key carnivalesque themes that reflect the unconventionality of the theory. In addition to Elliot's work, much attention is paid to Bakhtinian thinking within the wider field of Folklore. Researchers in this field have found it useful to explore aspects of carnivalesque theory in significant detail, refining Bakhtin's theories to highlight their clear links to performance contexts. This has enabled them to develop Bakhtin's theories and discuss in detail aspects of key carnivalesque terms, such as reversal and ambivalence, in a way that Bakhtin did not. I argue that this may be a necessary undertaking if working within the discipline of folklore; however, I argue that the detail Bakhtin provides and the context within which he provides it more than suffices for the purposes of my research. Thus, this study adopts a purist Bakhtinian conception of carnival and carnivalesque.

3.1.6 Bakhtinian carnivalesque

In 'Rabelais and his World' Bakhtin presents the most detailed account of his theory of the carnivalesque via his analysis of Rabelais' allusions to the significance of the carnival in the Middle Ages. He leads up to this through an account of how the significance of laughter and humour changed over time. He suggests that there was once a 'synergy' (Taylor, 1995) between the comic and the serious, during the period when class and politics did not exist, and this resulted in 'the serious and the comic aspects of the world and of the deity…[being]… equally sacred, equally "official" (RHW: 6). As class became more prevalent, however, due to the emergence of class-structured societies, the ruling classes sought to demonstrate and assert their power by inflicting a sense of fear and awe upon the lower classes and this was incompatible with any sense of the comic or of humour. Consequently, a divide between the comic and the serious surfaced which had the effect of driving the comic underground and creating a void between official and folk culture. It is at this stage in history, the medieval period, that Bakhtin suggests carnivals become a significant part of folk culture and when the comic evolves and takes on a significance, perhaps lacking before, that embodies a sense of liberation and celebration. A better sense of the ideas that Bakhtin writes about in relation to the actual Medieval carnivals that took place in the Middle Ages comes through in illustrations from Rabelais' novel, Gargantua and Pantagruel. The next section presents a selection of these images to supplement the

descriptions of medieval carnival, throughout this chapter.

3.1.7 Pictorial representations of Bakhtinian carnivalesque imagery

The features of a carnivalesque outlook illustrated, here, allow us to see the place that carnival has within a carnivalistic awareness of the world. All of Bakhtin's categories that go to make up a carnivalistic sense of the world stem from literary or pictorial carnivalistic imagery found primarily in the works of Rabelais (although it should be noted not exclusively as this imagery can also be seen in the works of Boccacio, Cervantes and Shakespeare - Taylor, 1995). The following illustrations represent scenes from Rabelais most notable story, Gargantua and Pantagruel. In Fig 4 we see the child-giant, Pantagruel, enjoying a feast and being fed. Bakhtin argues that giants presented an image of the body that was essentially grotesque and stresses that, for Rabelais, '…festive giants were the most important…and were saturated with the free atmosphere of the marketplace…[and]…closely connected with the popular [carnivalesque] conception of material-bodily wealth and abundance' and this illustration arguably captures the essence of that imagery.
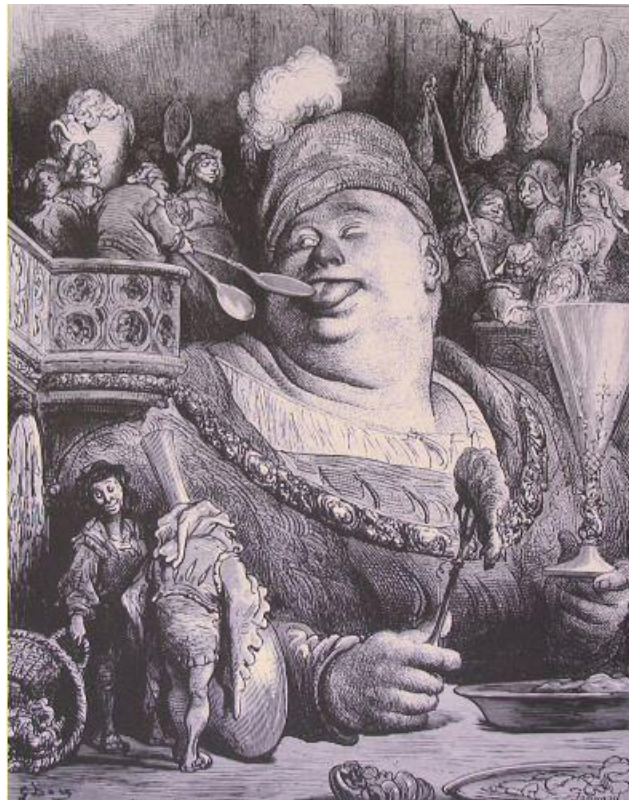
Fig 4 Feasting, as reflected in an illustration from Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel

In Figs 4 and 5, we can see Bakhtin's notion of the important role with real-world folk of popular festive-giants, reflected. Bakhtin highlights the festive protagonist role of giants within feasts, parades and processions: an image captured in this illustration.

Fig 5 (above) Festivity, as reflected in an illustration from Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel

In Fig 6 we see the giant, Gargantua, crying abundantly and 'mooing' like a cow after the birth of his son, Pantagruel killed his wife. In this scene, the grotesque body is depicted via images of simultaneous birth and death, hyperbole via a giant, crying exaggeratedly.

Fig 6 Hyperbole and grotesque realism reflected in an illustration from Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel

In Fig 7, once again we see carnivalesque imagery of feasting, abundance, festivity and equality reigning between those who, outside of carnival, would normally be separated by class, but we can also see a depiction, here, of what Bakhtin says is the driving force of carnival: the people's laughter (RHW).

Fig 7 Laughter, as represented in an illustration from Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel

During medieval times in France and, to an extent, England, carnivals were abundant, if heavily regulated by the ruling classes in terms of their frequency and timing throughout the year (RHW). The Medieval carnivals that Bakhtin refers to were held nationally, organised by cathedral sub-deacons, and commonly known as the 'Festival' or' Feast of Fools' (RHW). He argues that every common religious celebration had its carnival (RHW). Common events that exuded a carnivalistic sense of the world during these festive times were the harvesting of grapes, fun fairs and theatrical plays. Despite the element of control from the highness of the church and the strict management of their occurrence, Bakhtin contends that carnival, from a Rabelaisan perspective, was not an organised performance, spectacle or extension of the 'real world' as may be commonly misconceived (RHW) but a space within which equality between people and ideas reigned. Based on his exploration of Medieval Culture and both Rabelais and via other literary evidence, he proffers that people in the Middle Ages

lived what seemed to be dual lives, one being,

> 'the official life, monolithically serious and gloomy, subjugated to a strict hierarchical order, full of terror, dogmatism, reverence, and piety; the other [being] the life of the carnival square, free and unrestricted, full of ambivalent laughter, blasphemy, the profanation of everything sacred, full of debasing and obscenities, familiar contact with everyone and everything. Both these lives were legitimate, but separated by strict temporal boundaries' (PDP: 129-130)

As seen in the quotation above, during carnival time there is a sense of the world being turned on its head. Bakhtin argues that the carnival was a space within which 'ordinary' people could be liberated from the confines, rules and expectations of their everyday lives, and become someone completely other than themselves. It could be argued that it is this sense of ubiquitous anarchy, within an environment that was separate from the every day, and yet in many ways fiercely controlled, that leads us to the notion of carnivals being a fitting domicile for humour; especially if we accept the argument that humour always appears to represent an altered version of reality (Clarke, 2008) and that carnivals are the ultimate anti-reality.

The humour associated with carnivalesque theory Bakhtin terms 'folk humour' (RHW), and is comprised of three concepts: carnival, laughter and the grotesque. These concepts are represented by Bakhtin as he describes the following characteristic features of a carnivalistic awareness of the world. The first feature is the idea of familiar and free interaction between people. Within the realm of the carnival equality reigns and there is universality of all people resulting in a coming together of and an unreserved communication between people who may not interact in the 'real world'. Bakhtin argues that any distance between individuals or groups in the outside world is adjourned for the period of carnival (RHW). The second feature of a carnivalistic sense of the world is 'eccentricity': behaviour deemed intolerable in 'normal' life is appropriate and even sought after during the carnival. What might be considered as the under-belly of human life, encompassing repressed primal impulses, roams freely and abundantly in this festive environment (RHW). The third feature Bakhtin terms 'carnivalistic misalliances'. This encapsulates the view that carnival is a kind of 'syncretic, ritualised pageantry' that offers an alternative perspective to that of the everyday. It is a fleeting moment during which life escapes officialdom and embraces utopian liberty. In the

same moment, it is a reality and an idyll, both universal and all encompassing. Festivity is its defining feature of carnivalesque misalliances, encapsulated by Bakhtin as a 'festive life (Bakhtin, RHW: 8). Although having one foot in the door of reality, the significance of misalliances in carnival visibly reflects its lack of concern for practicality: instead, it is sanctioned by desire to experience the epitome of human existence (RHW). Linked to the earlier notion of people usually separated in the everyday being brought together by the carnival, carnivalistic misalliances describe the way attitudes of the carnival connect all that is normally separated: the 'sacred and the profane', the new and the old, the 'wise and the stupid' and so on. Everything that in the outside world is separated is brought together and 'drawn into carnivalistic contacts and combinations' (RHW: 160) during the carnival. The final carnivalistic category is concerned with the sacrilegious or 'profanation'. For Bakhtin, the carnival is a space for parody of the sacred, for ungodliness, profanity and blasphemy. This idea links to the sense of the carnival being a place for rebellion and mockery: a time of liberation from the confines of everyday life and from prevailing truth and established order. Bakhtin's carnival is a world in which people cease to inhabit their everyday roles and a space that seeks dynamic change (Bakhtin, 1984). In essence misalliances, freedom of communication, eccentricity and the sacrilegious all set the scene '…for working out, in a concretely sensuous, half-real and half play-acted form a new mode of inter-relationships between individuals, counter posed to the all-powerful socio-hierarchical discourse of non-carnival life' (Bakhtin, 1984b:123).

3.1.8 Carnivalesque as the ultimate alternative to officialdom

During the Medieval carnival or 'Festival of Fools' (RHW), referred to earlier in this chapter, the status that reigned in everyday existence was eradicated and equality reigned instead. People were reborn into raw human relations which were experienced tangibly (Robinson, 2011). Carnival is also a space that offers a 'positive alternative vision' not simply as a deconstruction of authoritative culture, but as another way of life predicated upon on a 'pattern of play' (Robinson, 2011). It quashed barriers between people established by hierarchies, instead providing an image of teamwork and egalitarianism. Within carnival, Bakhtin explains that individual egos were pulled towards a united whole, constantly regenerating (RHW). All of these facets of Medieval carnival epitomise subversion which, says Glazener, 'was directed against an official language that would deny the body, the cyclical nature of human life, and the triumph of the species over the death of the individual'

(Glazener, in Hirschkop and Shepherd, 2001: 159). During carnival, repressed creative energies are found and revealed. It clarifies and celebrates the idea that the social structures and/or systems in place at any one time are transitory; that they are 'historically variable and relative, and one day will come to an end', an idea the people can rejoice in whilst in the carnival space and away from the 'gloom' that Bakhtin suggests permeated their official lives (RHW).

3.1.9 The significance of carnival laughter

Laughter appears to be the driving force of a carnivalistic awareness of the world and the back bone of the theory of carnivalesque. After its time, in a pre-class society, as a phenomenon hailed as sacred, a symbol of the comic - the comic being a concept that had parity of status with the serious – Bakhtin explains that laughter became something much more negative in the eyes of the ruling classes. This pushed it underground and as class society evolved laughter became the domain of the working classes and, far from being the negative phenomenon labelled by those at the top of class society, was a wholly positive symbol of freedom, liberation and belonging for the masses. On this theme Bakhtin suggests that, '[t]he people's ambivalent laughter…expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it' (RHW: 94). Akin to the notion of laughter as a driving force is the suggestion that it holds an inordinate amount of power, which is arguably transferred to those who engage in it (RHW; PDP). The different views of laughter held by those with societal power and those without it seem to place humour and laughter in the position of being simultaneously positive and negative (RHW: 94). Fundamentally for Bakhtin, however, carnivalesque laughter is wholly positive, a sentiment best expressed via Bakhtin's (RHW: 94) suggestion that,

> 'True ambivalent and universal laughter does not deny seriousness but purifies and
> completes it. Laughter purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant and the petrified;
> it liberates from fanaticism, from fear and intimidation, from dialecticism, naïveté and
> illusion, from the single meaning, the single level, from sentimentality. Laughter does
> not permit seriousness to atrophy and to be torn away from the one being, forever
> incomplete. It restores its ambivalent wholeness. Such is the function of laughter in
> the historical development of culture and literature'

The different, and opposing, views of laughter held by those with societal power but positioned outside the carnival and those without social power but positioned inside seem to place laughter in a dichotomous position, as depicted in the image of the laughing folk mocking the gentry (RHW), below (Fig 8).
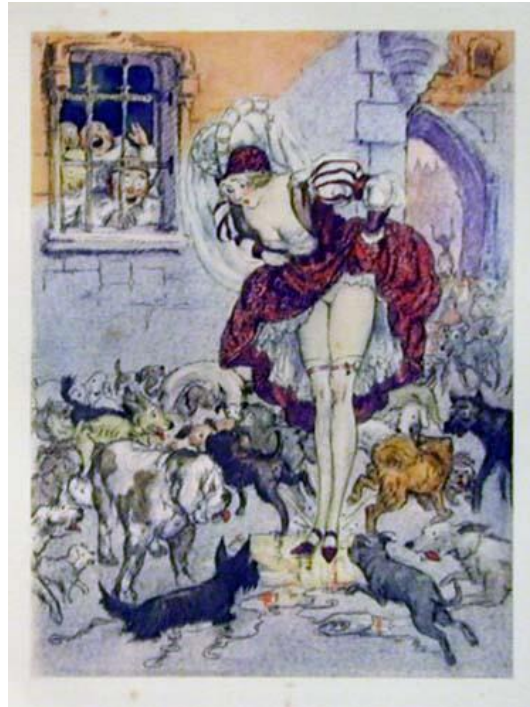
Fig 8

Carnivalesque Laughter does not only liberate people from fear, it contributes to overcoming it because of its complexity, strength and universality. It is a loud, collective, communal phenomenon best revealed in an unrestrained belly laugh. It facilitates freedom licensed by feast days and, in keeping with this positivity and openness, is a celebration of permissiveness. Further, in addition to being imbued with these qualities, carnivalesque laughter has epistemological status via carnival imagery that holds up emblems of power and authority as objects of derision. The chorus of laughter that responds to such images is far from negative and 'permit[s] the expression of antifeudal, popular truth' (RHW), revealing the assumed naturalness of the social order as fake. As such, in his work 'Epic and Novel', Bakhtin accredits laughter with investigative properties and the capacity to undertake a thorough scrutinisation of objects that appear within its range. In line with the idea of laughter as a 'driving force' is the suggestion it affords an inordinate amount of power to those who engage in it (Bakhtin, 1984). The different views of laughter held by those with

societal power and those without it seem to place laughter in a contradictory position as, within the middle ages it appears to be simultaneously positive and negative dependent upon the laugher's status. Given the complex nature of carnivalesque laughter and that it is the driving force behind a carnivalistic view of the world, it follows that it is the focus of other carnivalesque features. One such feature of significance, Bakhtin terms 'grotesque realism'.

3.1.10 Grotesque realism and the grotesque, material body

A strong theme within this Rabelaisian imagery, Bakhtin stipulates that the grotesque body is a 'specific type of imagery inherent to the culture of folk humor' (RHW). An extremely ancient concept, we find grotesque themes in mythology and of the Greeks and Romans of the pre-classic period. During this time, however, it was expelled from official life, deemed as inappropriate and unwanted in this sphere. Grotesque imagery emerged from its hiding place at the end of antiquity and embraced several art forms. Bakhtin explains that a new kind of grotesque materialised, but the influence of classical tradition on the aesthetic and artistic meant that grotesque imagery was not awarded a clear and stable definition nor was its meaning acknowledged in theory (RHW).

The term, as recognized in the Middle ages and Renaissance, refers to 'the lower bodily stratum' (e.g. the genital organs, belly and buttocks) and a host of ideas that can be connected to this corporeal image. An example of this can be seen within the imagery of Rabelais' most renowned tome, Gargantua and Pantagruel, as seen in Fig 9.

Fig 9 Grotesque imagery depicted in illustrations from Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel

The corporeal nature of the images in Fig 9 encompasses notions of hyperbolism; exaggeration; excessiveness; conception, birth and renewal; and degradation - the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal or abstract to the material level. Within carnivalesque imagery, therefore, it is common and positive to see, 'images of the human body with its food, drink, defecation and sexual life' (RHW). Throughout the experience of carnival an emphasis is placed on humanity, basic needs and the body, as well as sensory experiences, perhaps in contrast to the commands of the will. As a space, it lowers the spiritual and abstract to the material level, thus recognising embodiment, contrary to the dominance of traditions which look to escape (Robinson, 2010). The concept of grotesque, in some respects, represents this concept of lowering and embraces several features relating to the contrast between ideas such as birth and death, feasting and defecation. Bakhtin suggests that representations of the 'material bodily principle' in Rabelais' writing (and in the works of other Renaissance writers) are the personification of the traditional culture of folk humour. Moreover, the images characterise the specific 'aesthetic concept' emblematic of folk culture; an aesthetic concept that differs significantly from that of the periods in history that followed. He terms this 'grotesque realism' (RHW). Within a grotesque realist perspective all aspects of the human body are profoundly positive. The body is presented as something universal,

representing all the people, and very much not as separate from public life, or necessarily clandestine. Consequently, 'it is opposed to severance from the material and bodily roots of the world; it makes no pretense to renunciation of the earthy, or independence of the earth and the body (RHW). Bakhtin stipulates it is important for us to note that the grotesque body does not represent a modern way of conceptualizing it i.e. as the biological, physiological manifestation of an individual. The material bodily principle is manifest in 'the people'; the essence of whom grows, changes and renews. Thus, it is a concept that engenders grandiosity, hyperbole and immeasurability. The stand out motifs of this image of the body are 'fertility, growth' and as mentioned earlier, a wholly positive and assured '… brimming-over abundance' (RHW). Expressions of this bodily life do not represent the physicality and biology of individuals; instead they symbolize the 'collective, ancestral body of all the people' (RHW). The features of the material bodily principle and the grotesque body transport the notion of the everyday, mundane, monotonous existence of the body, to an energized, festive and celebratory space. The sense of this space is preserved within Rabelais' writing and, to an extent, within other Renaissance literature. That Bakhtin was so interested in the notion of elevating the physical body to a higher, liberating plane, Hitchcock suggests, may relate to Bakhtin's constant health issues which resulted in the amputation of his right leg. Hitchcock argues that, although '[p]eople don't write about the body merely because their body appears in permanent revolution against them, but one might take on the possibility that Bakhtin's excessive body, its grotesque order of pain, has a pertinent and permanent inscription in his theorization' (Hitchcock, 1998: 78). Another integral feature of grotesque realism that combines the positivity depicted here with the concept of 'bringing down to earth' – an idea that, in every day parlance, could be argued as having negative connotations, is degradation.

3.1.11 Grotesque realism: degradation

It is impossible to understand grotesque realism without grasping the importance of degradation. In this context, the term refers to 'the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity' (RHW). Bakhtin writes of the popular dialogues of Solomon and Morolf, the comic nature of which was particularly popular during the Medieval period. Solomon is depicted as a wise King and Morolf as a clown with an 'ugly face, misshapen body, and

ragged apparel' (FMR: 94) The dialogues show 'the contrast between extraordinary wisdom and sound common sense, which, in the affairs of life, so often proves superior to the former' (FMR: 94) The moralistic tone of Solomon's words contrasts with the facetious and degrading maxims of Morolf, the clown. Morolf continually pulls their exchanges down to a corporeal level and closer to ideas of feasting, digestion and the erotic. Morolf is fittingly representative of the role of the clown and fool in the Middle ages, whose role it was to debase all revered ceremonial and ritualistic acts to a fundamental, material level. It could be argued that Bakhtin understood the parodic role of the carnivalesque fool being to remind us that high art forms and all other features and spheres of everyday life stem from and return to the material body (RHW). Importantly, Bakhtin reminds us that grotesque realism is characterised by laughter as the people's laughter connects with the grotesque realist 'lower bodily strata': it engenders degradation and materialisation (RHW).

Degradation, in a Rabelaisian sense, means 'coming down to earth' and making contact with it: the earth being both something that consumes *and* brings into world, simultaneously. These two faces of degradation continue throughout Bakhtin's definition via its concern with burying, sowing and killing as well as with the bodily lower stratum, concurrently. The lower bodily stratum in this context comprises the stomach and reproductive organs and, therefore, the acts of defecating, sex, conception, pregnancy, and birth (RHW). It is these associated ideas that help us to understand the powerfully positive forces generated by the grotesque body because degradation, in a carnivalesque sense, means to bring down - implying a negative move from, for example, respect to disrespect – but to bring down to an area of the body responsible for conception and birth (RHW). This is best summed up by Bakhtin for whom 'grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving' (RHW). Reflected in this imagery is the idea of the lower bodily strata as entirely positive and valuable: a foreign conception within many contemporary societies (McKenzie, 2005).

3.1.12 Degradation, time and ambivalence

A meaningful consideration of grotesque realism includes the determining trait of its relation to time. Bakhtin tells us that 'the grotesque image reflects a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming' (RHW). Like

the material bodily principle, the relationship to time and space possessed by grotesque realism resonates with Bakhtin's own health struggles and his experience of a phantom leg post amputation. Regarding phantom limbs, Bahktin suggests '[t]he object that has been destroyed remains in the world but in a new form of being in time and space; it becomes the "other side" of the new object that has taken its place' (Hitchcock, 1995: 92). In this idea, we can see the significance of ambivalence in relation to the grotesque; particularly, here, in the meeting of the old and new incarnations of the limb. Ambivalence is another vital grotesque-realist characteristic, found in 'both poles of transformation, the old and the new, the dying and the procreating, the beginning and the end of the metamorphosis' (RHW). Akin to the significant presence of ambivalence is the emphatic differences to be found in manifestations of grotesque realism throughout different periods in history. The different depictions of the phenomenon in the Middle ages and the Renaissance, when compared with those within the Romantic period are stark and the nature and ramifications of the differences are such that for a useful understanding of Bakhtinian grotesque, they should be explored.

3.1.13 Medieval and Renaissance grotesque, Romantic grotesque and the changing role of laughter over time

As already noted, grotesque imagery existed well before Bakhtin. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the definition of grotesque adhered to in this study is, as part of the carnivalesque lens through which children' humour is explored, specifically Bakhtinian (predicated upon a medieval and Renaissance interpretation). Bakhtin writes of the difference between this incarnation of grotesque and that of the Romantic period. Medieval and Renaissance grotesque was irrefutably related to folk culture and belonged to everyone. In contrast, the Romantic version acquired a more clandestine character. It was almost an individual carnival, denoted by a stark sense of segregation. The rawness and corporeality of the carnival spirit became something personal, idealistic and much less visceral. No longer the tangible, material bodily experience of the people (RHW). Bakhtin stresses that the most significant difference between Romantic and Medieval/Renaissance grotesque was the understanding of and response to laughter. It endured, because, as Bakhtin notes, 'no grotesque, even the most timid, is conceivable in the atmosphere of absolute seriousness' (RHW) but was lowered to humour that engendered negativity e.g. irony and sarcasm. Laughter lost any connection with joy and celebration and its once constructive, revitalising

properties were minimised. Bakhtin makes much of this immensely significant change in the nature and place of laughter emphasising that 'laughter is as a rule considerably muffled' throughout the 18th and 19th centuries to the level of irony, humour, and other forms of reduced laughter' (PDP: 165). Providing further support for change in the status of laughter, he cites Romantic critic Jean-Paul's interpretation of laughter which labels it as 'destructive', 'against all reality' and that 'through it, the entire world is turned into something alien, something terrifying and unjustified. The ground slips from under our feet, and we are dizzy because we find nothing stable around us' (RHW: 42), perhaps signifying a political attempt to reign in the power of laughter as the great equalizer of humans and bodies.

As Bakhtin states, despite exhibiting some changes due to the more formal nature of the times '…[t]he carnival spirit still reigned in the depths of Renaissance literature' (RHW) and Bakhtin opined that 'Renaissance realism did not cut off the umbilical cord which tied them to the fruitful womb of earth' (RHW). As part of the changing nature of carnivalesque imagery, Bakhtin writes of how the significance, importance and positive nature of parody transformed once it left behind the freedom of the Middle Ages. For him, …'medieval parody is unique, quite unlike the purely formalist literary parody of modern times, which has a solely negative character and is deprived of regenerating ambivalence' (RHW). Further, Bakhtin laments that the notion of parody also changed over time. Medieval parody linked closely to positive carnivalesque degradation, associated with the grotesque, and brought the people's fear down to earth (Robinson, 2011). Like so many other aspects of the carnivalesque, parody was unable to preserve this positivity, significance and authenticity after the end of the renaissance (RHW).

3.1.14 Misinterpretations of grotesque

There is significant potential for the grotesque to be misinterpreted when viewed through a modern lens. For other scholars of the grotesque, an inherent sense of fear permeates. It may not appear as a fear of the unknown, the uncertain or of death but, for example, in the case of Kayser, as a fear of life (Harpham, 1976). For Bakhtin, this is a contradiction to the essence of grotesque imagery for him, where death does not negate life but, instead, is hailed as the people's collective body and a key component of life and 'the condition of its constant renewal and rejuvenation' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 49/50). Moreover, Bakhtin emphasises that fear has no place in carnivalesque grotesque and instead '…is the extreme expression of narrow-minded and stupid seriousness, which is defeated by laughter. Complete liberty is possible

only in the completely fearless world' (RHW). Bakhtin's emphasis on the freeing power of laughter from the confines of fear is expressed further in his comment that 'only dogmatic and authoritarian cultures are one-sidedly serious '(PDP: 134) and the violent undertones of politics attempt to quash humour because laughter has no connection to violence (Billig, 2008). The complexities of medieval grotesque hinted at here, prompt Bakhtin's keenness for us to retain an air of caution when appropriating grotesque theory, suggesting that 'the role of historians and theorists of literature and art' might assume anyone looking to apply the idea as a theoretical frame 'is to reconstruct this canon in its true sense. It should not be interpreted according to the norms of modern times; nor should it be seen as deviation from present-day concepts. The grotesque canon must be appraised according to its own measurements' (RHW).

Returning to the theme of changing perceptions of carnivalesque features over time, Bakhtin reminds us that within Medieval and Renaissance conceptions '…the system of grotesque imagery, death and renewal are inseparable in life as a whole, and life as a whole can inspire fear least of all' (RHW). Around the time of the French monarch Louis XIV's reign 'the atmosphere in which Rabelais was understood vanished almost entirely' resulting in a void forming between the culture of the time and Rabelais' work. The perception of his work as strange and as requiring specific literary interpretation and commentary was formed. Linked to this is the need to understand, from Bakhtin's perspective, how this isolation of Rabelais as a literary figure gathered momentum over the following years. The changing view of grotesque realism from positive and renewing to negative and sordid, Bakhtin suggests, means that '[t]he link with the essential aspects of being, with the organic system of popular-festive images, has been broken. Obscenity has become narrowly sexual, isolated, individual, and has no place in the new official system of philosophy and imagery" (RHW). In other words, images such as the illustration, below (Fig 10) are no longer welcomed, embraced and viewed with unbridled positivity and joy. Instead, they are labelled, in an everyday context, as suggestive and undesirable.
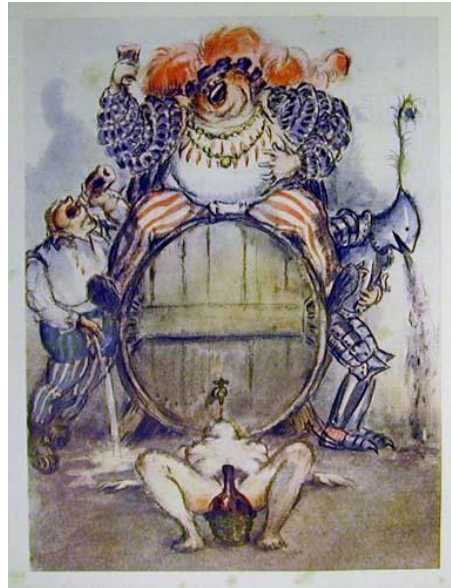
Fig 10

It would be incorrect to assume that this joyful relativism is universal, however, as it also has what Hollis describes as' a disturbing element' because it is usually those who have the least power who become susceptible to any danger that is born out of carnival and, as Bakhtin suggests, carnival's celebratory notion of a "cheerful death'". Hollis argues that perhaps Boston had a utopian view of carnival that did not recognise the potential carnival can have in relation to violence, when used only as a textual metaphor. Given this, it is important to bear this in mind when using carnival as a lens through which to analyse young children's humorous behaviours.

3.2 Dialogism: from theory to methodology

3.2.1 The roots of Bakhtinian dialogism
The concept of dialogism stems from Mikhail Bakhtin's philological and philosophical exploration of the significance of dialogue. The term means, 'many things to many critics, sometimes without reference to Bakhtin' (De Man, 1983: 100). This study is concerned only with Bakhtin's notion of the concept and attempts to gain optimum understanding of *his* thinking via his original works and those of his critics. Vice suggests that, even within Bakhtin's own writing, ambiguity shrouds its precise definition and that this may, in part, be

due to his using it both as a means of describing utterances or 'instances of language' *and,* as an epistemological 'defining quality of language itself' (Vice, 1997: 45). In its epistemological form, dialogism is socially charged (Hirschkop, 1989). In this context, '…dialogism is not only linked to a system of concepts but has a social force or implication as well as a socially "concrete" meaning (to use Bakhtin's language) which could be expressed as the difference between imagining dialogism as a debate in the Houses of Parliament or as an open air trade union meeting' (Hirschkop: 1989: 3-4). Both applications of dialogism involve the acknowledgement of an utterance (in an instance of language) or of language itself (when it is a defining quality of language) to the relationship it has to its past, to which it responds, and its future, which it anticipates (Shepherd, 2011).

The all-enveloping implications of the wider conception of dialogism need to be noted for application within this study, as does the idea that Bakhtin's terms are themselves dialogic. He suggests that, '[t]he meaning of a concept like dialogism or carnival is a sedimentation of past usages, current and past social conflicts, the changing forms of ideological life; in short, these terms are themselves dialogical (Hirshckop: 1989: 3). Aside from both the wider epistemological and narrower linguistic meanings of dialogism, Hirschkop (1989) suggests there is an even more transparent explanation for any ambiguity surrounding Bakhtin's dialogism. Firstly, he suggests that the wide array of interpretations is based upon dialogism as either a relation 'among utterances or styles' (an utterance being Bakhtin's 'basic unit of communication…marked entirely by social activity…' [Holt, 2003]) or, 'between any two intentions or an "authorial" and a "heroic" one' (Hirschkop, 1989, always in operation, or a more specifically historical phenomenon, depending on confrontation between social conventions of style or genre'. Arguably, within Bakhtin and Voloshinov's later writing the former definition, that dialogism is 'always in operation', dominates (Hirschkop, 1989) and the Bakhtin Circle's ideas about dialogism are underpinned by the proposition that dialogism is ever-present and, 'in actuality, we never say or hear *words*, we say and hear what is true or false, good or bad, important or unimportant, pleasant or unpleasant, and so on' (Voloshinov, 1973: 70).

3.2.2 Definitions of Dialogism
The existence of multiple understandings of dialogism seems linked to a notable shift in Bakhtin's (and Voloshinov's) work between the 1920s to the mid 1930s (Hirschkop, 1989). It

is possible that his reaction to Saussure's bureaucratised notion of *langue* being a 'social fact' in a society that Hirschkop describes as, 'a disturbingly homogenous collective' (1989: 8) prompted this shift. As Hirschkop identifies, this would have been a disturbing notion for Bakhtin so, although we cannot say for sure, it is not unlikely that his encounters with the ideas of Saussure and his sympathisers prompted the change of course in his and Voloshinov's writing (Hirschkop, 1989). The nature of this change involved, at first glance, an apparent acceptance that, 'the situatedness of an utterance can be expressed by the kind of abstract structures identified by linguistics' (Hirschkop, 1989:9). This acceptance would require Bakhtin to renege on his belief regarding the significance of intonation, however: an untenable notion. Consequently, the two separate definitions of dialogism (those of it referring to the relationship between linguistically separate styles, and the relationship between utterances – the latter definition serving to support his notion of the 'uniqueness of each speech event' (Hirschkop, 1989:9) as previously mentioned) run through his writing, simultaneously.

White (2009) employed a Bakhtinian dialogic methodology for her doctoral studies and offers a broad and clear definition of dialogism supporting the claim that, from a Bakhtinian perspective, it is profitable to view it as an epistemological phenomenon that can also be applied at a local level. She contends that in its omni-presence and acknowledgement of its own relational nature, '[d]ialogism begins with the everyday exchange or communicative act (but not necessarily only words), and is embedded in reality (White, 2009: 54). Arguably, the adoption of a definition due to its favourability is questionable, as it would seem to involve (potentially, at least) doing so to suit a particular project, rather than because the definition is particularly representative or accurate. However, Bakhtin supported others using his ideas to meet their own requirements, asserting that:

> '[Language] lies on the borderline between oneself and other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and personal language…but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own' (Bakhtin, 1981: 292).

3.2.3 Dialogism as a framework

To reach a satisfyingly comprehensive understanding of dialogism as an epistemological framework, we can explore its antithesis: monologism (Linell, 2003). Monologism can be described as a quality of discourse that refuses to acknowledge its relational nature (Shepherd, 2011). Within monologism there is no recognition of communication as a process through which knowledge can be constructed. Instead, communication is about representation and *transmission* of knowledge and emotions, born out of cognition, which precedes them (Linell, 2003). Monologism denies any possibility of meaning being constructed through communication or dialogue: knowledge is created, first, and then transferred via language. Consequently, monologism, for Bakhtin, is illusionary and can only ever be a smoke screen constructed to hide the ontology of dialogism. A definition of dialogism that provides an opportunity to explore its central features in greater depth stems from Linell (2003). He offers a more compositional explanation of the concept claiming that, despite a significant lack of consensus over a general theory of dialogism, it is possible to treat it as a, 'fairly coherent theoretical framework' (2003). The concept could be underpinned by three theoretical and epistemological assumptions about human action, communication and cognition: interactionism, contextualism and communicative constructionism (Linell, 2003). A variety of literature and theory can be drawn upon to support Linell's assertion that these assumptions help us gain a more comprehensive understanding of dialogism (Linell, 2003).

In order that the notions of interactionism, contextualism and communicative constructionism, as viewed within dialogism, can be explored adequately, however, we should note that, historically, there is evidence of at least two of Bakhtin's key terms being misunderstood and (mis)used interchangeably (Linell, 2003). A possible reason for this is the tendency for Bakhtin's terms to be used as, 'separate thoughts' and that this robs, '...them of their spirit' (Morson and Emerson, 1990: 10). Consequently, before presenting a discussion based upon Linell's central tenets of dialogism, two key terms will be clarified in relation to one another. This clarification should facilitate meaningful access to the ideas and, as varying approaches to dialogism have been developed in the interim, enable a more accurate picture of *Bakhtin's* dialogism to be painted.

3.2.4 Dialogism and Interactionism

Arguably a central tenet of dialogism, supported by much of the literature, is that language is always relational and '[c]ommunication and cognition always involves interaction with others (other persons, other systems, other dimensions of one´s self etc)' (Linell, 2003). The idea that dialogism and interaction are inextricably linked is widely supported (Bakhtin, 1981; Hirschkop, 1989; Vice, 1997; Linell, 2003; Holquist, 1984). However, contemporary debate arises over the connection between interaction and relation, and Bakhtin's definition of the relational aspect of dialogism. Hirschkop asks whether Bakhtin defines dialogism as a relation, 'among utterances or styles, or…[as] a relation between any two intentions or an "authorial" and a "heroic" one' (Hirschkop, 1986). Whether the relational nature of dialogism focuses on intentions or utterances/styles, we can be sure there is no doubt that it *is* relational (Vice, 1997). Robinson agrees, suggesting that dialogism's relational nature is evident in its premise that, '… a single consciousness separate from interaction with other consciousnesses is impossible' (Robinson, 2011: np). Bakhtin's tenet, that knowledge is dependent upon the interaction between consciousnesses and the outside world and that, '…we are shaped just as much, if not more, by the world, as the world by us' (Shotter, 2008: 1) has support from Bergson who suggests, 'not one of the categories of our thought – unity, multiplicity, mechanical causality, intelligent finality, etc. – applies exactly to the things of life... In vain we force the living into this or that one of our moulds. All the moulds crack' (Bergson, 1911: np). This is a strong argument in support of one of Bakhtin's central tenets of dialogism: the irreducible, unfinalisable epistemological nature of dialogue (DI); ideas that have been raised several times already but are worthy of further mention due to their gravity.

Within Bakhtinian dialogism the conscious mind is a result of communicative relations. They do not exist in isolation and, as Robinson argues 'there is no reason to assume dialogism stops at the limits of the inter-human' (Robinson, 2011: np); again, reflecting its capacity to be an all-encompassing, epistemological and ontological phenomenon. The power expressed here must not be misunderstood only as the capacity of dialogism to withstand language's potential to minimise and restrict; language-use can also amplify the dialogical landscape depicted here (DI). This ambivalence is reflected, too, in Dialogism's fundamental multiplicity and the synonymous, constant presence of isolation and synchronicity (DI). Dialogism could be misinterpreted as a collection of separate perspectives on the same thing, but this would be a misconception. For Bakhtin, it is the bringing together of completely irreconcilable aspects of separate perspectives, importantly, that have equal value or

'polyphony'. This leads us to another fundamental aspect of the theory: that the world is 'irreducible to unity' (Robinson, 2011): it is 'unfinalizable' (PDP) and, unlike within the dialectic tradition, the reduction of individual voices to a single voice is denied. This means that a single truth or meaning does not exist in dialogism (PDP) arguably exuding a carnivalesque spirit if we consider that '[c]arnival shakes up the authoritative version of language and values, making room for a multiplicity of voices and meanings' (Elliot, 1999: 129). Lastly, as Robinson states, 'truth is established by addressivity, engagement and commitment in a particular context' (Robinson, 2011), denoting the significance of the hero-author relationship, where heroes attempt to communicate and authors, to interpret their efforts (PDP).

3.2.5 Dialogism and its paradigmatic quality

By focusing on Bakhtin's terms themselves, Hirschkop illustrates the all-encompassing nature of dialogism. He suggests that, '[t]he meaning of a concept like dialogism or carnival is a sedimentation of past usages, current and past social conflicts, the changing forms of ideological life; in short, these terms are themselves dialogical. (Hirshckop, 1989: 3). Again, highlighting the broad nature of dialogism in one context, Hirschkop says Dialogism is, put simply 'a shorthand answer to the question: what happens when one understands something that is expressed?' (Hirschkop, 1999: 4). He goes on to explain the metaphorical quality of dialogism, arguing that even when we first meet the term in Bakhtin's writing and he discusses its capacity to be a particular relation between individual 'voices' 'in which each takes its shape as a conscious reaction to the ideological position of the other'(Hirschkop, 1999: 4), it remains simultaneously a metaphor for a wider defining facet of discourse: an idea to which dialogic research must attend (Sullivan, 2013).

3.2.6 Language as voice
Bakhtin often refers to language as voice. This, it seems, can be viewed as an, 'empirical shorthand for [his] novel proposition about the dialogism of all utterances' and links fundamentally to his emphasis on the importance of intonation. It is intonation, he suggests, that allows speakers to express their uniqueness in spite of the grammatically rule-bound, lexically conventional nature and pragmatism of a given language (Hirschkop, 1989: 6-7): an idea that seems to reflect the almost carnivalesque quality that language had for Bakhtin.

3.2.7 Heteroglossia

Relating to Bakhtin's interpretation of language as voice, heteroglossia describes a merging of world-views and voices through language that generates complex unity from an amalgam of utterances (Wills, 2006). More specifically, heteroglossia is, according to Allon White, 'Bakhtin's key term for describing the complex stratification of language into register, sociolect, dialect, and the mutual interanimation of these forms' (White, A. 1994:136). Holquist's interpretation builds upon this, suggesting that this interanimation necessarily involves the two opposing forces of communication: centripetal, which draws utterances towards a structured language, and centrifugal, which pushes them away from a structured language and towards everything else to which they relate (Holquist, in DI pxix-xx). Bakhtin expounds this point proposing that, '[e]very concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. Every utterance participates in the "unitary language" [in its centripetal forces and tendencies] and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia [the centrifugal, stratifying forces]' (DI: 272). Baxter and Montgomery warn us against confusing Bakhtin's concept of centrifugal and centripetal forces with the Hegalian/Marxist idea of a finite dialectical synthesis (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996: 114). They suggest, that although apparently similar, they are different. The main difference between these two positions is the issue of (un)finalisability. Bakhtin suggests that the centrifugal and centripetal forces that act upon utterances lead them to a position of freedom where they can 'go beyond the official discourse' and become something new. This is in stark contrast to Hegelian 'dialectics' which is based on the premise that language is finalisable and we need to analyse individual statements within language in order that we might reach some form of closure or resolution (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996).

Heteroglossia is the central condition residing over the process of meaning in an utterance. Bakhtin notes that it ensures the priority of context over text. Universally, there are contextual conditions e.g. existential, historical, social, meteorological, physiological, that will ensure that the meaning of a word uttered at that moment will differ from a meaning it would have under separate conditions (DI). All utterances, according to Bakhtin, are heteroglot because they are 'functions of a matrix of forces' essentially impossible to retrieve

and, resultantly, impossible to resolve. Heteroglossia helps us to conceive, as much as is possible, the moment where centripetal and centrifugal forces collide. Bakhtin phrases this in such a way that it facilitates an almost tangible sense of Heteroglossia. He explains that

> '[a]ll words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in the word' (Bakhtin, 1981: 293).

White (2009) leads us to an even clearer understanding of heteroglossia in the context of methodology, expounding that a single heteroglot is a collision between the centrifugal and centripetal forces of communication that creates, 'new meaning that goes beyond the official discourse' (White, J. 2009:64). It is imperative from the perspective of dialogic research, to notice and analyse the potential production of heteroglots in the data for this study, because Bakhtin proposes that it is the multiplicity of heteroglots within any one language and of languages themselves that, in many ways, leads us to dialogism (DiN), so, to ignore them would be to be disloyal to a dialogic approach.

3.2.8 Vygotsky and Bakhtin

As an early childhood professional, Vygotsky and his theory of social constructivism have been an influential presence throughout my academic career and has become extremely influential throughout western ECEC, generally (Moyles, 1997; Bruce, 2002). Like Saussure, much of Vygotsky's work is underpinned by a dialectic approach to language akin to Hegelian principles. Wegerif (2008) suggests that dialogism is often misappropriated and interchanged, misguidedly, with dialectics. He suggests that, 'the term dialogic is frequently appropriated to a Modernist framework of assumptions, in particular the neo-Vygotskian or sociocultural tradition. However, Vygotsky's theory of education is dialectic, not dialogic' (2008: 1). This is an important distinction and, with the influential presence of Vygotsky in the field of ECEC, one that fuelled my desire to explore what characterises 'dialogic' and why it seems important for early childhood researchers to have clarity on this. Wegerif argues that the confusion between dialogism and dialectics comes from the misnomer that dialogism means no more than, 'pertaining to dialogue' (Wegerif, 2008). He argues this happens

because of a failure to question ontological assumptions. Basic Bakhtinian understanding of dialogism holds that truth is born when two or more voices are present. That is not to say that dialogism only pertains to a linguistic exchange between two or more interlocutors. Instead, a simple but more accurate definition states it is, 'when a speaker produces an utterance at least two voices can be heard simultaneously' (Wertsch, 1991: 13 cited in Wegerif, 2008). This can be explained via Bakhtin's idea of 'inter-animation' that suggests, 'the meaning of an utterance is not reducible to the intentions of the speaker or to the response of the addressee but emerges between these two' (Holquist, 1981: 429-430). As well as having relevance for the methodology of this study, the disparity between Vygotkian and Bakhtinian approaches, and the popularity and influence of Vygotsky in Western ECEC, bolsters a tenet of this study's conceptual framework that suggests ECEC has an over-reliance on certain theoretical stances. It is necessary, therefore, for those 'go to' theories to be probed via the application of a different way of thinking. The following chapter explains how the dialogic methodology adopted within this study aims to facilitate this different mode of thinking and employ it to explore where children' humour fits into this discussion.

Chapter 4: A Bakhtinian inspired methodology

4.1 A Dialogic approach to research

A dialogic approach to research is novel when considered amongst established qualitative research methods (Sullivan, 2013). It is useful, therefore, to consider the ways in which a dialogic methodology has been employed before. White (2009) adopted a dialogic methodology for her doctoral study and argues that Dialogism can be explained both as 'a unifying means of exploring voice; and its authorship – its lived construction, enactment and interpretation by another' (White, 2009:10). Further, she argues that adopting a Bakhtinian stance on voice involves researchers focusing on participants' point-of-view and paying attention as well to the discourses that influence their understandings. She suggests that the 'Bakhtinian *hero'* attempts to communicate, and the 'Bakhtinian *author'* evaluates, endeavouring to make sense of what has been presented. Significantly, from a researcher perspective, White points out that it is the dialogue between the hero and author in 'authorship activity' that the dialogic researcher focuses on (White, 2009: 10). In the context of my study, much as in the context of White's (2009, 2013), this means the children will be viewed as Bakhtinian 'heroes', displaying humour and attempting (or not) to communicate via their manifestations or appreciation of humour; and the practitioner researchers (PRs) and I will be viewed as Bakhtinian 'authors' who aim to interpret and evaluate children humour production and appreciation.

4.1.2 Dialogism as epistemology
White's (2009; 2013a; 2013b) broad and clear definition of dialogism supports the claim that, from a Bakhtinian perspective, it is profitable to view it as an epistemological phenomenon that can also be applied at a local level. She contends that in its omni-presence and acknowledgement of its own relational nature, '[d]ialogism begins with the everyday exchange or communicative act (but not necessarily only words), and is embedded in reality (White, 2009:54). Arguably, the adoption of a definition due to its favourability is questionable, as it would seem to involve (potentially, at least) doing so to suit a particular project, rather than because the definition is particularly representative or accurate. However,

Bakhtin supported others adopting a considered approach to using his ideas for their own requirements, asserting that,

> '[Language] lies on the borderline between oneself and other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and personal language…but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own' (Bakhtin, 1981: 292)

Here, Bakhtin indicates that he never intended for his words to be final and that he welcomed his words being appropriated and interpreted by others. Consequently, if an interpretation of dialogism serves to support its application in an educational context, Bakhtin would endorse it, providing it preserves the spirit of his words and reflects an 'attempt to understand how [he] came to assemble his potent analytical instruments' (Shepherd, 2005 cited in Matusov, 2007: 216). Matusov (2007) provides examples of educationalists' ignoring the roots of Bakhtin's ideas, resulting in his ideas being misappropriated. Matusov (2007) warns against educationalists neglecting the foundational work of philologists when drawing on Bakhtin for fear of losing the depth of understanding they provide – a notion I will keep in mind at all times throughout this project.

4.1.1 Privileging the 'pravda' of participant voices

A primary feature of my doctoral study is the exploration of child and practitioner perceptions of children's humour in a nursery setting. More specifically, the study is concerned with the subjectivity of perception via Bakhtin's concept of 'field of vision' through which 'our internal micro-dialogue is informed by the emotional−evaluative stances and intonations of others' (Burkitt, 2013: 267). In other words, the study is concerned with the way that perceptions are influenced and shaped by multiple voices and perspectives that stem from changeable social, historical, and physiological conditions (amongst others) or from the presence of 'heteroglossia' (Bakhtin, 1981). Sullivan suggests that, '[i]f …data is concerned with subjectivity, then it may be worthwhile shepherding it into the arms of a dialogic methodology' (Sullivan, 2012: 1) because through the application of Bakhtinian

concepts, '[a] dialogical approach provides the tools for the methodological analysis of subjectivity in qualitative data…subjectivity [being] theorised as changing and responsive to others' (Sullivan, 2012:1).

Many other methodologies including grounded theory, interpretive phenomenological analysis, narrative analysis and varieties of discourse analysis offer tools to analyse subjectivity (Sullivan, 2012: 1). Some may argue that a dialogic methodology is like many of these approaches; however, one significant difference is that a dialogic methodology focuses on a Bakhtinian interpretation of dialogue where, 'ideas are exchanged but ideas are actually *lived* (my emphasis) rather than abstract and are full of personal values and judgements' (Sullivan, 2012: 2). The distinction between abstract and lived ideas is much easier to make in the Russian language (Bakhtin's primary language) as there is a word for 'truth as lived' (pravda) and 'truth as abstract' (istina) (Sullivan, 2012). My study will focus intently on the lived experiences or truth (pravda) of the participants; the bearing this has on their thoughts, perceptions, values, beliefs and attitudes; and the relationship between these two foci and my research questions. It is important, also, to clarify my allegiance to Bakhtinian dialogism because, as Linell reminds us, the term dialogism '…can be used in many ways...[and]… is not one coherent school, or theory, not even something that 'dialogists' of different persuasions would agree upon' (Linell, 2004: 4). Further, De Man notes that '[t]he term means, 'many things to many critics, sometimes without reference to Bakhtin' (De Man, 1983: 100). This study is concerned only with Bakhtin's notion of the concept and attempts to gain optimum understanding of *his* thinking via his original works and those who have made use of his theories.

4.1.3 Dialogism and the notion of a framework

Until recently, in educational research and the wider research community, dialogism had seldom been used as a methodology (Sullivan, 2012). Between 2012 and 2018 more interest has been shown in the methodological potential of Dialogsim but it is still a relative newcomer to the field. Therefore, the basis of my decision to use dialogism to underpin the study did not stem from a wide range of precedents. Instead, it was inspired in the first instance by the inextricable link between dialogism and carnivalesque and the idea that a primary concern of social scientists should be their ethical stance (Robson, 2011). When

reading a number of Bakhtin's earlier works, it is hard to ignore his strong ethical position, that places ethics at the heart of dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981). Frank elucidates, facilitating access to Bakhtin's approach to ethics using an example of Bakhtin's assessment of the Dostoevskian character, Devushkin. Frank writes of how Bakhtin describes Devushkin recognising himself in a character in Gorgol's story 'The Overcoat'. Bakhtin writes that Devushkin, "…was outraged that his poverty had been spied upon, that his entire life had been analysed and described, that he had been defined once and for all, that he had been left with no other prospects" (PDP:58 cited in Frank, 2005: 965). Frank describes, "Devushkin's feelings as providing a caution as to how social science should not leave its subjects feeling' (Frank, 2005: 965). This has relevance for the emotional register of the KMs in the analysis. Sullivan argues that it is the '*emotional register'* and '*emotional* intonation' that allow a speaker to offer meaning and value within the utterances (Sullivan, 2013) and as a dialogic researcher I will need to attend to this when analysing the voices of the participants. Attention to this aspect of the data will facilitate meaningful consideration of the impact that emotional context can have within an utterance. Further to Frank's assessment of Devushkin's predicament, it seems reasonable to suggest any actions leaving participants feeling 'spied upon', 'analysed' - in the cold and callus sense of the word - and/or 'defined' would be counter to the Economic Social Research Council's key principles for ethical research. These include 'minimis[ing] risk and harm'; conducting research with 'integrity and transparency'; and the respect of the 'rights and dignity of individuals and groups' (ESRC, 2015); as well as to Bakhtin's fundamental allegiance to the ethical nature of language. With the need to uphold the highest ethical standards throughout, it is helpful to hold on to Musaeus' reminder that, ''dialogism is not a method of data collection; it permeates the entire research study' (no date: 32) and, as ethics are intricately woven through dialogism, they, too, permeate the whole study.

From this perspective, dialogism provides the basis for an appropriate social science methodology. In another respect, it is far from ideal, given that one of its central premises is that of the unfinalisable nature of people and language (PDP). It could be argued that one aim of a doctoral thesis is to demonstrate accountability and that this could be described as a monologic aim, or as seeking to claim accountability for something and therefore claim 'the last word' (Bakhtin, 1984b). This contradicts Bakhtin's theory by not providing an, 'empirically adequate description of the human condition' or being ethically sound (Frank, 2005: 965). Doctoral students, therefore, are presented with a problem: how do you write a

thesis that draws conclusions that withstand rigorous examination whilst being true to the concept of unfinalisability? Frank helps with this dilemma suggesting that, '…in Bakhtin's dialogical ideal, the research report must always understand itself not as a final statement of who the research participants are, but as one move in a continuing dialogue through which those participants will continue to form themselves as they continue to become a may yet be' (Frank, 2005: 966-7). This sentiment will be carried through the research process surrounding this thesis, and beyond.

4.1.4 The idiosyncratic nature of dialogic research

The idea that Bakhtin's notion of dialogue assumes that authors try to communicate their own experiences to themselves, as well as to others, is key to dialogic research. This differs from other forms of analysis in that the participants are not subjects waiting to be known but are, themselves, knowers, and like researchers, are capable of cyclical interpretation of what is trustworthy, or worthy of suspicion (Sullivan, 2012). In addition, Sullivan argues that potentially, more than other approaches, a focus on Bakhtinian dialogue and therefore on lived experience or 'pravda', 'brings an intense focus to the transformative effect of genres on experience, particularly on the experience of space and time (or 'chronotope' in Bakhtin's words)' (Sullivan, 2012: 15). Furthermore, a dialogic approach views discourse aesthetically which facilitates the privileging of subjectivity, through '…inviting and *privileging* observation and examination of the relational nature of *research* and…celebrat[ing] the *subjective* nature of the information gathered through this process (Russell, 2002). Lastly, Sullivan suggests that *bureaucracy*, in the form of data preparation, and *charisma*, in terms of 'a capacity' of the researcher 'to actualise procedures' using a charismatic writing style can feature in dialogic research analysis, to strengthen the dialogicality of the analysis: a point I return to in the process of data analysis and refer to in more detail in Chapter 5.

4.1.5 Dialogism, subjectivity and intersubjectivity

Dialogic research, Sullivan (2012) suggests, differs from other methods that adopt a Bakhtinian view of dialogue in several ways but, predominantly, in its attempt to give subjectivity and experience a more central role. A dialogic approach to data analysis, Sullivan argues, offers methodological tools for the analysis of participant subjectivity (Sullivan,

2012). He suggests that subjectivity, in this instance, changes and responds to others and, if a researcher wishes to focus on subjectivity within data, it may be fruitful to adopt a dialogical methodology (ibid). Further, he suggests that it is important to distinguish the type of subjectivity the research is concerned with, highlighting three dominant conceptions: blank, complex and uncomplicated (ibid). He suggests that dialogic research can draw on ideas within all three of these conceptions of subjectivity to focus on a 'dialogical subjectivity' but that, crucially, the dialogic researcher focuses on subjectivity that relates to self and other and, therefore, is inherently social (Sullivan, 2012) and better described as intersubjectivity. To establish further how the analysis process can be classed as dialogic, it is important to review the nature of the questions that a dialogic researcher might ask of data. The types of questions associated with subjectivity may be worded like this: 'what is it like to feel anger towards another person?'; 'what is the significance of leadership in social groups?'; 'or how do participants express responses to humour?' Unlike the subjectivity at the heart of other methods that have a focus on it, these questions reflect the dialogic researcher's interest in viewing participants as 'conscious' and 'not already given' with the focus being on voice as 'point of view', not 'individual[s] with experiences' (Sullivan, 2012: 21).

4.2 Grounding dialogic assumptions

So far, several themes have been discussed in relation to their role in Bakhtin's dialogic theory. However, there are several Bakhtinian theoretical assumptions named specifically by Bakhtin that underpin this study. It is not possible to offer an in-depth discussion of all of them here, suffice to say that the most pertinent are included here, but it should be noted that all of Bakhtin's dialogic concepts have been considered carefully and reflected within this project. The following discussion details the assumptions that this research and the analysis of data are grounded in and makes clear how each concept relates to the study. The concepts of hero and author were raised and discussed earlier, so will not feature here.

4.2.1 Bakhtinian Dialogue

Many approaches to and interpretations of dialogue exist such as those of Buber, Habermas and Gadamer (Sullivan, 2012). This study adopts a Bakhtinian approach to dialogue as offered in Sullivan (2012: 212): that is, that dialogue is a vehicle for the exchange of lived experiences that are brimming with 'personal values and judgments'. In the section to follow I will outline how this is relevant, particularly for the analysis of the data. We can understand the concept of love abstractly, as a strong feeling of affection; however, we acquire a different understanding of the sensation of love through experiencing and feeling it viscerally (Sullivan, 2012). The Russian language has two distinct words that describe abstract and lived truth, *istina* and *pravda*: often depicted by Bakhtin as representing contrasting sides of a single idea (Bakhtin, 1993). Sullivan (2012) argues that to experience another person as humorous involves both an abstract understanding of what it means to be humorous (istina) and the instant sensation of it in a specific encounter with another person; for example, if we make another person laugh, we may *feel* humorous (pravda). Bakhtin (1990) suggests that this type of lived experience is only available to us via someone else. He describes the act of seeing a part of someone that they cannot see themselves as 'authorial surplus', and suggests that in authoring another, we 'gift' them the opportunity to experience something in a way that would be impossible otherwise. White explains further that it, '[r]epresents the visual and discursive horizon of social partners who, as a result of their unique line of vision, are each privy to privileges and constraints which will influence their interpretations of other – literally and figuratively drawn from their unique ideological horizon' (White, 2009: 58). Sullivan suggests that this affords power to authorship, giving it the capacity to shape others and that two important factors in this process are the intonation and emotional register of language (Sullivan, 2012). Bakhtin uses art as an analogy for this emotion-wracked moulding of others, suggesting that during encounters we offer one another a form which may be received willingly or resisted. Further, we have the capacity to shape our worlds as a work of art may be shaped, transforming our lives according to the social values we hold in esteem such as to be humorous, or a generous friend and dialogue can be a means of 'feeling the different shapes and sounds' of these 'idea[s] […intonation…] through life' (Sullivan, 2012: 4). The distinction Bakhtin draws between abstract and lived experiences has direct implications for the analysis of data collected in this study. My focus will be on the lived experiences of the children and PRs, rather than the abstract, in an attempt to gain better

access to the subjectivity of the participants that is 'changing and respon[ding] to others' (Sullivan, 2012: 1).

There are many rhetorical features of dialogue that can affect the meaning or interpretation of it. Those that are utilised within this study are helpfully précised by Sullivan in the table below, illustrating the relationship between each feature of dialogue and 'the other' (what is the other, here), and a short explanation of its meaning.

Rhetorical feature	Relationship to other	Otherwise known as
Hidden dialogue	The other's voice is continually anticipated.	Reservations and hesitations.
Penetrative word	Capacity of other to reassure us when we are torn between different judgements.	Interruption.
Word with a sidewards glance	Fearful of other's judgements	Disclaimer.
Word with a loophole	Escape from a definitive statement. Hope of vindication.	Disclaimer.
Sore-spots	Strong reaction to other's words.	Extreme-case formulation.
Stylisation	Agreement with other's words.	Stylisation.
Parody	Disagreement with other's words.	Parody.

Fig 11 (Adapted from Sullivan, 2012)

4.3 Why Dialogism?

Grounded theory, interpretive phenomenological analysis, narrative analysis and varieties of discourse analysis also provide methodological tools for analysis of subjectivity (Sullivan, 2012). Consequently, it is important to distinguish dialogic research from the rest of the field and look at why a dialogic perspective on subjectivity lends itself to this study.

4.3.1 Trust and suspicion

Sullivan (2012) describes a dilemma within many qualitative analysis approaches, concerning a "hermeneutics of suspicion" and a "hermeneutics of trust"' (Sullivan, 2012: 9). He refers to Ricoeur's (1981 in Sullivan 2012) theory distinguishing methods that adopt a critical approach and aim to remove the researcher from the content, and those that aim to retain an openness with regards to 'truths' of the data (Sullivan, 2012). He describes how some types of narrative analysis place distance between the researcher and the people in the research, instead encouraging the transcribed text to become the central concern. The researcher then looks at the data through rhetorical or social action lenses using, for example, Goffman's theory of symbolic interaction; or, adopting a lens to explore power-relations, using, for example, Foucauldian theories suspicious of how truth claims are organised (ibid). Conversely, types of grounded and phenomenological analysis, Sullivan argues, utilise a more trusting approach which assumes the data contains 'clues to another world' (2012: 10). There are numerous variations of phenomenological and grounded approaches that demonstrate belief in the data; however, what seems most important for this study is to recognise that there is distinction to be made between data analysis approaches that trust the data and those that are suspicious of it (Sullivan, 2012). This does not mean, however, that analysis methods must fall into one or the other of these categories and Sullivan suggests that dialogic analysis, like some forms of narrative analysis that veer towards discourse analysis, can combine the two (ibid). It could be argued that it would be useful to adopt an analysis approach that combines trust and suspicion in way that enables researchers to gain insight into the lived experiences of participants, yet also bring in an element of suspicion in an attempt to inspire 'an empathetic opening up of the possibilities of the data' (Sullivan, 2012: 14), and that a dialogic approach could facilitate that.

4.3.2 Alternative methodologies that utilize Bakhtinian dialogue

Sullivan (2012) suggests that there are many imaginative interpretations of and ways that a Bakhtinian approach to dialogue have been operationalised within research. For example, he highlights Hermans' (2001, 2002) use of his 'dialogical self' theory, asserting how the self consists of numerous 'I-positions' each continually seeking to dominate; Wertsch (1991, 1998) and his emphasis on 'voices' that are historical, social and institutional in nature and merge in discourse; Matusov's (2009) focus on 'interpersonal dialogic relations' alongside the breadth of institutional relations in the context of education; Hicks' (1996, 2002) use of

'contextual inquiry' focusing on detailed valuations of shifting cultural symbols through analysis of narratives and discourses; and McCarthy and Wright's (2004) methods combining Dewian aesthetics and Bakhtinian dialogism.

Given this range of approaches to Bakhtinian dialogue it is important to articulate why I did not adopt one of them. As the essence of dialogism does not facilitate a consistent methodological framework (Sullivan, 2012), it would feel disrespectful of the individual and subjective nature of the data in this study to appropriate any of the above approaches. In order that the methodology and analysis remain focused upon the voices of the participants, I reasoned it was necessary to create a novel framework that responds to the pravda of the participants.

4.4 The Pilot Study

As a precursor to the main study I conducted a pilot study; in part, to test a selection of dialogic research methods (forms of which were used by White in her 2009 doctoral research). Other reasons for the pilot were pragmatic, conceptual and ethical: to test the equipment; check the likelihood of capturing 'enough' of children's humour on film; determine whether there are optimum times for capturing humour; facilitate the criteria for analysis design, including the significant Bakhtinian concepts that would be operationalized in the main study; ensure the methods are in place for ensuring children maintain the right to withdraw throughout; and to test interview/consultation techniques.

4.4.1 Setting and participants
The pilot study took place in an urban nursery setting for children between birth and five years old and involved two key early childhood practitioners and four children aged between 3 and 4 years old (all names have been anonymised).

4.4.2 Procedures
Data were collected via video observations. Two static cameras were set up to film the child and practitioner participants (Keyes, 2006; Loizou, 2007), and one head-mounted camera (similar to those worn in White's 2009 doctoral research) worn by one of the practitioner participants. 'Loosely structured' interviews (dialogic encounters) were conducted and video-

recorded (King and Horrocks, 2010) with all participants. During the dialogic encounters participants were asked to view video clips of the child participants spontaneously displaying or responding to humour and to express a response. Once the initial interviews were transcribed, in keeping with the dialogic methodology, secondary interviews were conducted presenting all participants with an opportunity to view the transcripts (and/or watch the interview video) and change/explain and/or expand upon their comments in the initial interview.

The data were analysed dialogically drawing on Sullivan's (2012) work, and utilising utterance as the unit of analysis - more than a sentence or word, an utterance is always answerable. Bakhtin suggests that because we '…live in a world of others' words." (Bakhtin, 1984: 143) we need to recognise that "[a]ny understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive...' and that, '[a]ny utterance is a link in the chain of communication" (Bakhtin, 1986: 68, 84). This reminds us that, "[t]he word lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context." (Bakhtin, 1981: 284): and hence the answerable utterance is a fitting unit of analysis for a dialogic study looking to bridge the gap between different contexts.

Features of Bakhtinian carnivalesque were applied to the data, to generate a range of pertinent utterances, or 'KMs' (Sullivan, 2012). The most apparent features of carnivalesque within the data were concepts of hyperbole, grotesque and clowning, but other features were present also and will form part of the discussion. In this context exaggeration, excess and the moving of the particular to the realm of the universal personify hyperbole. The children's appreciation of the grotesque focuses particularly on the scatological imagery associated with debasing and renewing properties of the lower bodily stratum (Bakhtin, PDP). The concept of clowning in the analysis revolves around Bakhtin's suggestion that, 'Clowns and fools...are characteristic of the medieval culture of humour. They were the constant, accredited representatives of the carnival spirit in everyday life out of carnival season' representing, 'a certain form of life, which was real and ideal at the same time (Bakhtin, 1984: 8). It also bears more resemblance to the 'teasing' highlighted by Cameron et al (2008) and not their use of 'clowning' as here clowning is seen as 'attempting to provoke a response from a

communicative partner' (Cameron et al 2008: 8) as opposed to attempting to repeat an act in order to 're-elicit (my emphasis) laughter from others' (Cameron et al 2008: 8).

4.4.3 Implications for main study

Whilst my pilot study data do not show children engaging in an intentional and authentic Rabelaisian carnival, their actions and behaviours can be classified as embodying the spirit of Bakhtin's carnivalesque, and this offers us potentially valuable insights into the nature of their humour (White, 2013). Shortcomings in my data collection methods will necessitate changes, from attempting to acquire the Bakhtinian notion of 'point of view' in opposition to truth (White, 2009) more effectively via the use of head cameras for all participants, including the children; to examining the effects of my involvement in the study and how this may affect the way children behave, and this will be discussed in more details in the next section. However, this does not detract from the discovery that the children produced and enjoyed humour that embodied a carnivalesque spirit. Although exploratory and limited, this initial study established thought-provoking correlations between the children's humour captured and Bakhtinian carnivalesque (Tallant, 2015). Additionally, the pilot study established that a dialogic methodology was pertinent because, '[d]ialogic inquiry…involves the use of methods that 'examine' the active and responsive nature of language among participants in appropriating, constructing, and reconstructing knowledge for self and other' (Kotsopoulos, 2010: 297). This is an apposite feature given the aim to explore *how* children use the 'language' of humour within early years settings; *how* practitioners and I perceive, relate and respond to children' humour, and the significance of these factors for early childhood practice and pedagogy.

4.5 Implications of Pilot Study for the Main Study

4.5.1 Orientation period

The pilot demonstrated there needed to be a substantial orientation period to familiarise all participants with the processes involved in the project. This was illustrated most clearly by the interviews with practitioners in which they found it very challenging to comment on what they were seeing without me prompting them with questions. This meant that the interviews were not sufficiently dialogic. Consequently, I planned to spend at least one month visiting

the nursery on a regular basis so that I would have made at least 8 visits lasting at least a morning or an afternoon before commencing data collection. During these visits I talked to the children and practitioners about the project, but also become part of the 'everyday' activities that go on in the nursery to enable the children and staff to become used to my presence.

4.5.2 Participants

It soon became clear that only having to two target children involved in the study was not going to allow for the collection of the type of data I was looking for. On realising this, I wrote in my research journal:

> *'I attempted to video snack time with one static camera and PPA wearing a head camera. There were some instances of humour but not from TC1 (Target Child 1). This seems to be a potential issue and it is worth considering all of the children in the room being TCs. It was particularly apparent when filming the children over lunchtime. The TC present did not express humour over the period of lunchtime. However, I saw three girls sitting on the table next to me playing and laughing, seemingly outside of the practitioners' gaze. As this kind of humour is something that I am particularly keen to capture and explore in the main study, I think it is necessary to involve all children in the room. As previously mentioned it will involve all children in the room wearing a head camera as well as the PRs and myself'.*

> *(Researcher journal, 7.4.14)*

4.5.3 Cameras

The static cameras proved useful in the pilot as they captured the broad view of the room and whole instances of humour as well as practitioners' activity and responses. However, the static cameras were not able to provide clarity of the detail of the humorous exchanges between children and adults as often the cameras were either too far away from the participants, or the noise levels in the room were such that the recording was not clear enough. Further, the static cameras did not adequately capture the participants' 'point of view' (Bakhtin, 1986): a crucial part of a dialogic methodology. Consequently, head cameras would be worn by all participants, including the children, to enable detailed footage of each participant's point of view to be captured and analysed.

4.5.4 Head cameras

During the pilot study the head camera worn by the practitioners was not angled adequately and thus, the recorded images were too high, meaning that adults and children were not captured on film. This was something I could address successfully within the main study, the details of which are discussed further on in this chapter.

4.5.6 Interviews as Dialogic Encounters

During the pilot the recorded conversations with adults and children were referred to as interviews. The term interview seemed to have connotations for the practitioners which resulted in the conversations taking the form of question and answer sessions as opposed to conversations. The question and answer sessions hindered the dialogic processes that the project calls for so during the main study they will be known as dialogic encounters (inspired by White, 2009; 2013) to eliminate the notion of the traditional interview and its often monologic associations.

4.5.7 Biographic Dialogic Encounters as Background Interviews

Having completed the dialogic encounters for the pilot study it became clear that primary and secondary dialogic influences are not enough. In order to meaningfully access the thoughts and beliefs of the practitioners that lead to them viewing children and humour in particular ways it seems necessary to conduct the third style of dialogic encounter prior to the other two. This is biographic in nature. Rodriguez (2004) argues that finding out about a person's history can offer clues as to why they think in and feel particular ways. Further, borrowing from the essence of Pinar's (1975) phenomenologically inspired concept of currere, Pinar suggests that visiting aspects of the past that 'hover… over the present' may allow us to recognise how the 'biographic past…is contributive to the biographic present' and that a researcher attending to a participant's past, may have an opportunity to reflect upon 'the present…acting out of the past' and the 'superimposition of past issues and situations and persons onto the present' (Pinar, 1975: 7).

4.5.8 Research journals

For the pilot study, I provided the practitioners with research journals and asked them to record anything that they thought would be useful or interesting and that they would like to

discuss. As mentioned earlier, the practitioners did not write anything in their journals and explained they had forgotten about them during the data collection. Consequently, in the main study, the journals (other than my own) were available to the PRs, and I explained their purpose and value as clearly as I could, but they did not constitute a formal data collection method.

4.6 The Main Study

4.6.1 The setting and participants

To locate the study and identify participants, I approached one setting, the manager of which was known to me. It was a private, urban ECEC setting, comprising eight rooms arranged by children's ages, and an outdoor area. The setting is registered to care for up to 106 children at any one time. This study was focused in one of the eight play rooms with eighteen children between the ages of 3 and 4 years old of British and Eurasian extraction and involved 4 early childhood practitioners all based in one room, one of whom was the room leader. To identify each participant whilst upholding anonymity, stickers were used to represent each child and adult. The children and practitioners each chose a sticker to represent themselves and this was applied to their head camera. The stickers are used in the findings chapter to differentiate between the participants. At the time of the study there were 29 early years practitioners employed at the nursery. All of them held at least a Level 3 qualification apart from one, who was working towards it. One practitioner, based in the room this study took place in, held Early Years Professional Status, a postgraduate qualification, and another was undertaking study.

All participants took on the role of 'researcher as dialogic partner' in context with their own role within the nursery and within the research, reflecting Christensen and James' (2002: 482) concept of 'ethical symmetry' which assumes 'the ethical relationship between researcher and informant is the same whether he or she conducts research with adults or children'. Moreover, ideally, the process of deconstruction and reconstruction in dialogic research ought to be conducted by both researcher and participants, implying a need for participants to be co-researchers, and for an equitable balance of power, or

polyphonic (Bakhtin, 1981) relationship between researcher and researched to be established and maintained throughout the research process (Sullivan, 2012). Arguably, universal equality between researcher and participants is impossible, particularly given the parameters of doctoral study and the requirement for doctoral researchers to have ultimate control over the thesis. It seems reasonable (from a doctoral perspective) and necessary (from a dialogic perspective), however, for a dialogic research project to have a polyphonic data collection process, requiring researcher and participants alike to contribute to the creation of meaning (Sullivan, 2012). This approach can provide an opportunity for the participants' point-of-view to be prioritised throughout the thesis. White's (2009) research reflects this as she, too, experienced the challenge of the requirement to demonstrate fundamental authority over her thesis whilst remaining faithful to the dialogic nature of her research (White, 2009). Ultimately, White recognised the impossibility of preserving a multiplicity of voices throughout her thesis that could communicate with one another, openly and candidly (RHW). As this is one of dialogism's central tenets, clearly reconciling the need to be faithful to a dialogic approach and meet the requirements of doctoral research was problematic. She suggests she was only able to achieve this by highlighting the parallels between her dilemma and what she sees as a, 'central flaw in Bakhtin's earliest philosophy when applied to real people in real contexts; that is, there are always powerful and not so powerful voices at work within language' (White, 2009: 210). This 'flaw' as White suggests, appears to have been addressed by Bakhtin later in his life, which has only been brought to the attention of the English-speaking world because of recent translations of some of his later works. For example, Emerson (2016) suggests it was only later that Bakhtin started to offer thoughts about human studies as a research field, which supports White's idea that his earliest works do not necessarily lend themselves, directly, to social science research. In response to this, in her Jubilee Lecture at Sheffield University, Emerson spoke about an epistemology continuum that, for Bakhtin, places 'thing cognition' which searches for and reveals 'precision and exactness', labelling what it reveals in order to assess or pass judgement on it, at one end; and 'personality cognition' that is never revealed by 'formal or forced interrogation' and only reveals itself in response to being asked (Emerson, 2016), at the other. Dialogic researchers are concerned with personality cognition (Bakhtin, 1981) and, therefore, it is fitting to framing research participants as 'dialogic partners' (White, 2009) who are asked to reveal their reality to achieve dialogic validity (Lincoln, 1995). One way of safeguarding dialogic validity is for the dialogic partners' voices to remain prominent, post project completion. To do this, we can follow the lead of Ginsburg's 1989-1998 ethnography on pro-life and pro-

choice women, by acknowledging the uniqueness of the dialogic partners' voices and ensuring that they do not become subsumed into overarching social theories and, therefore, become lost in them (Sauukko, 2005).

Further, with the adult participants in this study being referred to as practitioner researchers, the children are referred to as child researchers throughout the thesis. I recognise that the children have limited capacity as researchers in this project. Firstly, a sophisticated understanding of the context, premises and aims of the study are not accessible to the children due to their young age (Clarke, 2005). Secondly, the doctoral nature of this study presents limitations as to what can be achieved given a limited time-frame and access to resources. However, this does not mean that the children cannot be presented with an opportunity to contribute to the analysis process, as the practitioners are, by offering their views and responses to aspects of the data. Arguably, this justifies affording them a type of researcher status because, although I am ultimately responsible for the findings, conclusions and implications of the study, I argue it is important to recognise the central role that the children and practitioners have in the production but *also* the analysis of the data. This theme is reflected in Sullivan's conceptualization of the dialogic partnership between researcher and participants in a dialogic approach to data collection and analysis (Sullivan, 2012). In addition, all the participants being known as child or PRs (children and PRs) helps to lessen the effects of status within the project, however minimally, but any efforts to combat the ill effects of hierarchy are welcome (Albon and Rosen, 2015). I am referred to as 'the researcher' throughout and accept ultimate responsibility for the overall outcomes of the project, until after completion, when the child and PRs will be invited to continue our partnership. As already alluded to, the practitioners' and children's roles as researchers were limited (and this was made clear to them from the beginning) but their contributions and insights as to the evolving data throughout the collection process are valued highly and form a significant and foregrounding element of the dialogic research process (Sullivan, 2012; White, 2013). As mentioned earlier, White (2009) struggled with many of the issues raised in this section during her doctoral study and suggested that it was a notion she returned to several times throughout the process and attempted to address. Ultimately, she tried to ensure that participant point-of-view (Bakhtin, 1986) was foregrounded throughout her thesis, to be as faithful to the dialogic underpinnings of her project as possible, which supported the

research of other dialogic researchers who experienced similar issues within their research (Bingham and Sidorkin, 2001; Brown and Renshaw, 2006; Lensmire, 1997 and Maybin, 2006). This was borne in mind throughout my own study and continually reflected upon throughout the research.

Throughout this study 'young children' refers to children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, unless otherwise specified. Commonly, children at this age are referred to as 'pre-school children', however, I am not comfortable with this term due to its deficit-focus on what children will become, as opposed to a focus on who they *are*.

4.6.2 Data collection

The collection of data for this study involved several interconnected methods including observations; filming; Dialogic Encounters as interviews with the PRs and children; research journals; and analysis journals, in line with the complexity of a Bakhtinian dialogic approach to research and the need to be faithful to Bakhtinian ideology. The methods employed are outlined below, first in table format and then in more detail.

Data collection stage	Data collection methods
Round A	Video recorded observations (using head cameras and static cameras)
	Biographic Dialogic Encounter
	Child Dialogic Encounter
	Practitioner Dialogic Encounter 1
	Practitioner Dialogic Encounter 2
Round B	Video recorded observations (using head cameras and static cameras)
	Child Dialogic Encounter
	Practitioner Dialogic Encounter 1
	Practitioner Dialogic Encounter 2
	Practitioner Analysis Journal

Fig 12 Overview of data collection methods

4.6.3 Observations

I collected data via video observations of child dialogic partners between the ages of three and five years old who attend the 3-5-year-old room in an urban nursery, and two PRs who, respectively, attend/work for a nursery setting for children between the ages of three months and five years old. A static camera was set up within the nursery to capture an overall view, as seen in projects conducted by a number of early childhood researchers (Keyes, 2006; Loizou, 2007; Riordan and Marshall, 2008), and used in addition to head cameras worn by myself and all participants (as seen in White's 2009 study) in an attempt to gain access to the participants' and my own point-of-view (see Appendix for a diagram of my head camera design). I viewed the footage from the static camera after every filming session to identify any potential humorous encounters (as categorised in agreement with the PRs prior to filming - see Appendix…). The head camera footage from the participants involved in the humorous encounters was be isolated and displayed using 'polyphonic video' that displayed multiple perspectives of the same event, simultaneously, on a split screen (a technique first used by White in her 2009 project) using the video analysis software Transana.

4.6.4 Dialogic Encounters

'Loosely structured' Dialogic Encounters (conducted in lieu of the more traditional interview) were carried out with the children and PRs and video-recorded. In the first instance, Biographic Dialogic Encounters (Sawyer and Norris, 2012) were engaged in, followed by initial (DE1) then response (DE2) interviews (Dialogic Encounters) being conducted and video-recorded by a static camera (as seen in research by King and Horrocks, 2010). The Biographic Dialogic Encounters (BDE) took place with practitioner participants only; to provide footage for analysis by the participants and myself during the Primary Dialogic Encounters (DE1). In addition, footage of the children and PRs producing and/or responding to humour was watched and analysed by the PRs and me in each DE1. Secondary Dialogic Encounters (DE2) were conducted with the PRs to provide an opportunity for us to watch the footage of the Primary Dialogic Encounters to reflect on and respond to the dialogue therein. Primary Dialogic Encounters (DE1), in which the children had an opportunity to watch the footage of themselves engaging with humour, were conducted.

The child and adult researchers were asked to view clips of themselves and/or the child researchers displaying or responding to humour that may be considered carnivalesque (categorised via a Bakhtinian-inspired method), and to express their responses. Once the initial dialogic encounters were transcribed, based upon the decision for all participants to act as co-researchers, secondary dialogic encounters were conducted, presenting co-researchers with an opportunity to view the transcripts (and/or watch the consultation video) and change/explain and/or expand upon their thoughts about the conversations in the initial consultation, having had time to consider their initial responses.

4.6.5 Research Journals

Throughout the pilot process all researchers had the opportunity to keep research journals; however, neither of the PRs found time to write in them. Thus, in the main study, the PRs were offered the opportunity to write in a research journal but I did not anticipate them doing so, so did not rely on this as source of data. The children in this study were offered an opportunity to have open access to a video diary and research mediator (an adult, known to them, that the child could speak to about their participation in the research) so they could voice any thoughts, ideas or concerns they may have had with regards to the research topic and process. This was in lieu of a research journal. The children's research mediator was their Key Person who was the adult within the nursery with whom they had a particularly close relationship and was someone the children knew they could trust (Elfer et al, 2005). Given the young age of the children, the project information was presented to them in an appropriate and accessible manner, during a carpet time session, by one of the PRs.

4.6.6 Cameras

Small, unobtrusive static cameras attached to the wall by Bluetac were set up around the room in the nursery to film the PRs, children and me, as seen in research conducted by Keyes (2006), Loizou (2007) and Riordan and Marshall (2008). In addition, all children, PRs and I wore a head-mounted camera. Everyone had his/her own head-mounted camera for the duration of the research. The use of head-mounted cameras by adults is well established in research with young children (Pereira et al, no date; Darbyshire et al, 2005; Yoshida and Smith, 2008; Aslin, 2009) as they provide a non-disruptive and accurate practitioner-eye view of children. Children wearing head-mounted cameras for research purposes, for aiding access to a child's point of view, is also well-documented in published research by Aslin

(2008, 2009, 2012), Murray et al (2007) Adolf et al (2008), Clearfield (2011), Frank (2012) and (White, 2009). For the main study, I used an adapted head camera band to avert the angle-problem encountered in the pilot. At the beginning of the research process I introduced all participants to the head cameras and head band by sitting with them in a group and explaining that each child and adult who takes part in the project had their own head camera and head band. So, the children felt a sense of ownership over their head bands, and to help them feel empowered and capable as participants (Hoffman-Ekstein et al, 2008) or child researchers, everyone had the opportunity to decorate and personalise the head bands using fabric paints and crayons, in an attempt to, 'adopt practices that resonate with children' own concerns…' (Christensen and James, 2008: 8). This activity was successful and enjoyed by children and staff alike.

4.6.7 Primary Dialogic Encounters (DE1)

PRs and children viewed video clips of the practitioner and child participants spontaneously displaying or responding to humour and expressed responses. This approach aided recall for both adults and children (Dockett and Perry, 2005). In line with a dialogic approach, the participants also developed categories or 'sub-genres' (Bakhtin, 1984b) (as seen in White's 2009 doctoral research) for the displays of and responses to humour, which were compared with previously prepared carnivalesque codes. The films watched in the DE1s comprised of multiple screens displayed side by side, each depicting the same event but from the individual perspectives of those involved (a screenshot of the multiple screens can be seen in Fig 19). In this respect, the video technique used was 'polyphonic,' an approach created by White (2013) in light of Bakhtin's notion of 'polyphony.' This term, inspired by Bakhtin's interest in Dostoevsky's novelistic approach, when used in a research context, requires the researcher to consider the nature and position of the multiple voices and perspectives present (Sullivan, 2012). These unique viewpoints include what Bakhtin describes as an individual's 'visual surplus' (White, 2014), a concept closely related to polyphony and that explains the way individuals have a unique field of vision, allowing them to see and interpret the world in a way that is inaccessible to others (White, 2016).

The clips were selected from the overall camera footage of the children and PRs by viewing the static camera films first. Laughter and smiling, as humour cues (Provine, 1996) were used to identify humorous events. I took note of who had a role in the event, then looked for the event on each of the head camera films of those involved. This provided each person's

perspective of the event. I gathered the clips together and uploaded them to Transana – a video analysis software, that allowed me to play up to 4 clips alongside one another simultaneously as a 'polyphonic video' (White, 2009). During the DE1s, the PRs (two at a time, to maintain the staff-child ratios in the nursery – Elsa and Gerda, followed by Ana and Bulda) and I sat in the family room at the nursery, watched the polyphonic videos and talked about what was happening, whilst I filmed our Dialogic Encounter. All the children were invited to watch the polyphonic videos with me whilst sitting on the carpet, as I filmed the Dialogic Encounter, and the children were free to come and go as they pleased. Technical difficulties prevented the adoption of a polyphonic approach when videoing the DE1s with the PRs and we were unable to use head cameras when the children were watching because there were children present who did not have consent to be filmed. I did not think it was ethical or appropriate to ask those children not to be in the room, so the DE1 was filmed with a static camera that only focused on the children.

4.6.8 Secondary Dialogic Encounters (DE2)

As explained, earlier, Secondary Dialogic Encounters (DE2) were conducted with the PRs (Sullivan, 2012) presenting them with an opportunity to watch the video of the first Dialogic Encounters and explain, change and/or expand upon their comments in DE1. These were conducted in the spirit of dialogic unfinalisability to signal to the participants my wish for them to be content with their words and phrases uttered in DE1 and to be in keeping with the ethos of unfinalisability and help keep the participants and their views at the centre of the research (Sullivan, 2012). Technical and logistical problems prevented us from carrying out a DE2 with the children.

4.6.9 PR Analysis Journals

The PRs had a third and fourth opportunity to corroborate/clarify their opinions, thoughts, ideas and analyses, the last of which was as close to the end of the project as was feasible for them and myself; once again in the spirit of recognizing the changing and unfinalisable nature of dialogue. This process does not mean that once the PRs voices were heard for final time (before submission of the thesis), that the PRs voices were final at this point: only that I interrupted the dialogue at this point to reflect on their perspectives and draw conclusions based on what was presented.

4.6.10 Ethical considerations

I provided opt-in consent forms and a project information sheet (see Appendix) for the parents of all child participants to sign (Wiles et al, 2004). I (along with the child participants' research mediator) consulted the child participants to make clear to them that if they did not wish to take part in the research at any point all they need do is express their wishes. I remained sensitive to the children's efforts to communicate their ongoing consent to take part and fully respected their wishes should they demonstrate that they were not content at any stage of the process. I remained sensitive to my 'ethical radar' (Skånfors, 2009) which may alert me to the various ways 'children can and do express their resistance' (Skånfors, 2009:15). This became particularly evident during the second round of observations, when a number of the children decided they did not want to wear their head cameras anymore and each of them felt comfortable enough to take it off, without saying anything, and place it in the camera box, or give it to a member of staff.

4.6.10.1 Locational considerations

The door to the outside space remained closed for the duration of the observations to prevent children from inadvertently filming anyone with their head camera, anyone who had not given consent for this. A large photograph of a head camera and an arrow attached to a cardboard box was placed in front of the door to the toilets. This meant that it was not possible for children to walk into the children without circumnavigating the box. The children were asked to place their head cameras into the box before going into the toilets to prevent inadvertent filming whilst the children were in there. An adult also monitored the door to the toilets during filming to ensure children did not forget to take off the camera before going into the toilets. This was effective and no incidents of children wearing head cameras in the toilets occurred (for a photograph of the sign, see Appendix).

4.6.10.2 Research mediators

In response to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the child participants had open access to a 'research mediator' who was their Key Person (Elfer et al, 2005) and who were available to answer any questions the children had over the course of the research and beyond and was available to advocate on their behalf at all times. As far as I am aware, the children did not express any thoughts about the research process to

their mediators. All of this information was presented to the children in an appropriate and accessible manner by me and their key person.

4.6.10.3 Access to video footage

I made it clear to all children, parents of children and early years practitioners who may have been captured on video that selected sections of the video would only be used for the purpose of my research and would not be viewed by anyone other than myself, my examiners, all research participants, the child participants' parents and my doctoral supervisors. The videos were kept safe and secure at all times on a password protected computer in my home. It was made clear to all participants that they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

4.6.10.4 Practitioner participants

I provided opt-in consent forms for the four practitioner participants, for all parents of the children who may be captured on video during the process of the pilot study and opt-out consent forms for all early childhood practitioners in the same situation (Wiles et al, 2004).

4.6.11 Ethics – a Bakhtinian stance

White reminds us that, 'a Bakhtinian approach to dialogic research is fundamentally concerned with morality and, as such, an ethical entreaty permeates every facet of research design, analysis and presentation of results' (White, 2009: 70). In addition, she suggests that, 'dialogic inquiry involves a combination of reflexivity and accountability to the participants by giving value to their contributions' (2009: 70). In her dialogic study, White ensured, 'that value was given to the aesthetic process of interpretation, and to the changing, shaping, and altering points -of- view of the participants, alongside my quest as a doctoral candidate in search of insights' (White, 2009: 70, 2013a; 2013b). She found maintaining this position particularly challenging at times, in part because when she conducted her study there were few, if any, precedents on which to draw. Consequently, my own research acknowledges the struggles experienced by White and these remained prevalent throughout the research process, to anticipate and lessen the challenges I faced.

The first of these challenges was gaining access to Bakhtin's notion of point-of-view – given the existence of what Bakhtin terms 'authorial surplus', which refers to the author's perception of the hero: something to which the hero never has access. I experienced difficulties in acknowledging this authorial surplus and looking beyond it. White (2009) does not mention how she approached this in her study. This is an issue I acknowledged during the data collection process and my resolve lies in the idea that acknowledging its presence provided me with an opportunity to respond to the challenge. Secondly, White struggled with the apparent dichotomy between a central tenet of dialogism being, 'that multiple voices should remain in play and be able to speak frankly with one another' (White, 2009: 210) and attending to the polyphonous relationship between herself and the participant researchers, a polyphonous relationship in which all members are equal (Ooi, no date); and being a doctoral student tasked with producing, 'theory within the monologic discourse of the traditional thesis genre', a position which affords more power to the student than the participants (White, 2009: 210). Ideally, the process of deconstruction and reconstruction in dialogic research ought to be conducted by both researcher and participants, implying a need for participants to be co-researchers, and for an equitable balance of power, or polyphonic (Bakhtin, 1981) relationship between researcher and researched to be established and maintained throughout the research process (Sullivan, 2012). Arguably, universal equality between researcher and participants is impossible, particularly given the parameters of doctoral study and the requirement for doctoral researchers to have ultimate control over the thesis. It seems reasonable (from a doctoral perspective) and necessary (from a dialogic perspective), however, for a dialogic research project to have a polyphonic data collection process, requiring researcher and participants alike to contribute to the creation of meaning (Sullivan, 2012). This approach can provide an opportunity for the participants' point-of-view to be prioritised throughout the thesis. White's (2009) research supports this as she, too, experienced the challenge of the requirement to demonstrate fundamental authority over her thesis whilst remaining faithful to the dialogic nature of her research (White, 2009). Ultimately, White recognised the impossibility of preserving a multiplicity of voices throughout her thesis that could communicate with one another, openly and candidly (Bakhtin, 1984b). As this is one of dialogism's central tenets, clearly reconciling the need to be faithful to a dialogic approach and meet the requirements of doctoral research was problematic. She

suggests she was only able to achieve this by highlighting the parallels between her dilemma and what she sees as a, 'central flaw in Bakhtin's earliest philosophy when applied to real people in real contexts; that is, there are always powerful and not so powerful voices at work within language' (White, 2009: 210). This 'flaw' as White suggests, appears to have been addressed by Bakhtin later in his life, which has only been brought to the attention of the English-speaking world because of recent translations of some of his later works. For example, according to Emerson (2016) it was only later that Bakhtin started to offer thoughts about human studies as a research field, which supports White's idea that his earliest works do not necessarily lend themselves, directly, to social science research. In response to this, in her Jubilee Lecture at Sheffield University, Caryl Emerson spoke about an epistemology continuum that, for Bakhtin, places 'thing cognition' which searches for and reveals 'precision and exactness', labelling what it reveals in order assess or pass judgement on it, at one end; and 'personality cognition' that is never revealed by 'formal or forced interrogation' and only reveals itself in response to being asked (Emerson, 2016), at the other. With dialogic researchers only ever being concerned with personality cognition (Bakhtin, 1981) it can be argued that participants within a dialogic research study can be framed as 'dialogic partners' (White, 2009: p x) who are asked to reveal their reality to achieve dialogic validity (Lincoln, 1995). One way of safeguarding dialogic validity is for the dialogic partners' voices to remain prominent, post project completion. To do this, we can follow the lead of Ginsburg's 1989-1998 ethnography on pro-life and pro-choice women, by acknowledging the uniqueness of the dialogic partners' voices and ensuring that they do not become subsumed into overarching social theories and, therefore, become lost in them (Sauukko, 2005).

Fig 13 (below) is an example of the procedures established for the collection of data and the dialogic engagements. A regular routine was set up to facilitate the smooth running of the data collection whilst ensuring that it slotted around the PR's and children's daily routines.

Children's Humour Research Schedule

WEEK 1 *(Italics = flexible day and suggestions)*

Time	Mon 24th Nov	Tues 25th Nov	Weds 26th Nov	Thurs 27th Nov	Fri 27th Nov
8.15	LT to arrive		LT video editing all day	LT to arrive	LT to arrive
8.30	Interviews x 2 PRs	LT to arrive (set up cameras and decide their exact location)		Dialogic Encounter 1 with PRs x2 (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with PRs x2 (PRs to watch video of Dialogic Encounter 1 - filmed but only for transcription purposes)
9					
9.30					
10		Preparation for filming. Place necessary signs on doors (no entry, filming in progress; no entry to one of the bathrooms), place head band box at the door of the bathroom being used (talk to CRs about cameras; fit the cameras to the head bands and switch on; explain that if the CRs want to take off the head band to come and		Dialogic Encounter 1 with CRs in main room (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with CRs in main room (CRs to watch video of Dialogic Encounter 1 - filmed but only for transcription purposes)

Fig 13

Initially I asked the PRs to create their own humour categories whilst watching the polyphonic videos of children appreciating and producing humour. This was to ease them in to the process, as well as to focus their minds on what they looked for when categorising children's behaviour as humorous; a method that can help participants with orientation into a research mode (Cohen and Manion, 2014). For a detailed timeline of the data collection please see Appendix.

4.6.3 Data Analysis

4.6.3.1 A dialogic approach to narrative discourse analysis

In line with the dialogic nature of the methodology, the study adopts a dialogic approach to narrative discourse analysis (Sullivan, 2012), predicated, as outlined earlier, upon Bakhtinian dialogism. In offering a Bakhtinian framework for narrative analysis I have drawn on closely related concepts: authorship, dialogism, carnivalesque (it being inextricably linked to dialogism) and the utterance. Along with his theory of carnivalesque and the associated corporeality of Medieval folk humour and grotesque realism, Dialogue is arguably the other concept most associated with Bakhtin, and with carnivalesque, cuts through his life's work. Yet, it is often a misunderstood concept (Hirschkop, 1998). Dialogue is not just a verbal rejoinder between speakers or writers; rather, it is a way of perceiving the world and human

beings' position in the world. In this sense it becomes an epistemology, a praxis. According to this framework, one becomes a subject only by participating in dialogue. Bakhtin stresses the inherent connection between personhood and dialogue by stating that, '[i]n dialogue a person not only shows himself outwardly, but he becomes for the first time what he is (1984: 252). Moreover, he argues that the very possibility for humans to experience consciousness is only possible through a relationship with another. He writes, 'I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another' (1984: 287). Hence, he bridges the intimate cognitive awareness of the self with the surroundings in which this takes place. For analysis to happen, arguably it is necessary to reduce the raw data in some way in order that it can be addressed in the write up. Sullivan argues that in many qualitative approaches, the creation of hierarchical categories drawn from a coding of the data, plays a key role in this process (Sullivan, 2012); however, in line with a dialogic approach, in this study I adopt utterance as the unit of analysis which creates an opportunity for a more creative and, in some ways, charismatic approach (Sullivan 2012). A dialogical approach to data analysis, Sullivan (2012) says, creates a context in which a range of traditional and novel analysis tools can be used in tandem to support and strengthen one another. Here, I outline and justify the novel data analysis tools adopted in this study.

4.6.3.2. Genre analysis

In recent years, a number of education researchers have adopted a generic approach to analysis (White, 2009). For example, White's doctoral study employed genre as an analytical tool, allowing her a means of focusing on 'the toddler-as-hero in relation to adult-as-author' (White, 2009: 61). Further, utilising genre in this way offered an opportunity for White to move to a space, away from adult constructions of metaphoricity, that she argues facilitated an aesthetic exploration of the everyday communications within the setting, perhaps in a way that an analysis not operationalising genre would not have. Moreover, a focus on genre provides opportunity to focus on form and content which White suggests allowed for the exploration of secondary genres in the setting which, in turn, added to the nature of the authorship of her participants (White, 2009).

Genre analysis has been employed by a growing number of researchers in education (Linell, 1998), both to examine the genres of teaching (Edwards, 1997; Moen, 2005; Rockwell, 2000) and learning with school-aged children (Maybin, 2006). The language of preschoolers (Cohen & Uhry, 2007; Gillen, 2002; Ishiguro, 2009) and a two year old child at bedtime

(Dore, 1995) have also been investigated using genre as a central analytic category. These authors conclude that children are highly skilled at moving between genre depending on their contexts, and that the associated dialogue alters (in content and form) between different social contexts. A similar phenomenon is evident in a study of three- to- five-year olds by Sawyer (1997) who found that different styles of language, which he calls "role voicing", were employed across genders and age groups in play contexts. Following on from this idea, Rockwell (2000: 272) makes the important point that "diverse speech genres in play held together as a single performance", arguing for a consideration of multiple genres within utterance. Alongside a broader dialogical analysis of the data, the first part of the analysis adopted a generic approach because the primary feature of the data is a carnivalistic sense of the world. Focusing on the carnivalesque as a genre, therefore, aided an in-depth analysis of the conceptualization of children's humour as carnivalesque. The following section that focused on the PR's responses and perceptions also adopted the broader approach of dialogic analysis, coupled with a slightly more in-depth analysis of chronotope. Both of these analytical tools are discussed and justified in the next section.

4.6.3.3 Genre in dialogic analysis

Encouragement for the analysis of the data via genre comes from Sullivan (2012) who argues that genres 'create effects of reality and truth, authority and plausibility, which are central to the different ways the world is understood in the writing of history or of philosophy or of science, or in painting, or in everyday talk'. The notion of 'creating effects' appears to fit with one premise of Bakhtinian dialogism, that 'a person also cannot be fully revealed to or known in the world, because of constant change and 'unfinalisability'' (Robinson, 2011). From a dialogic perspective, therefore, it could be argued that we are all effects of ourselves when viewed by others. Given they can never 'know' us, we can never be 'revealed' to them and we all possess something of each other that an individual cannot possess of themselves – authorial surplus.

4.6.3.4.1 Soundbites and created dialogues

Sullivan (2012) suggests that whilst going through the data to find KMs we can come across smaller sections of data or 'soundbites' that express an experience or experience in an interesting manner. They provide a means of giving a taste of the generic or chronotopic quality of a group of comments that focus on aspects of a particular topic. Another dialogic tool that involves soundbites and is utilized within the analysis is that of 'created dialogues' (Sullivan, 2012). The sound bites from a range of contexts are brought together in a new context, defined by a shared topic of discussion. Sullivan argues that created dialogues can 'show…how anticipated voices and viewpoints of different people enter into direct dialogue with each other' (Sullivan, 2012: 108). This allows a researcher to focus on the generic qualities within the created dialogue and the significance of this in relation to the research questions. As Sullivan points out, this research tool has an imaginary quality, offering as a dialogue, a conversation that never took place. For this reason, he cautions that it 'probably ought to be contextualized by more traditional data methods' (Sullivan, 2012: 8). For this reason, I have only included a limited number of created conversations within the analysis and ensured that they are surrounded by whole utterances to privilege the voices of the participants. I could have avoided the use of created conversations completely; however, I argue that their place within the analysis adds strength to the themes generated by the participants and helps to communicate the participants' points-of-view (Bakhtin, 1984b) more effectively: arguably reflecting the polyphony and heteroglot nature of the participants voices more powerfully.

4.6.3.4.2 Created dialogues with an invisible other

Bakhtin also uses this technique when analyzing Dostoevskian texts. Further, he introduces his conceptualization of a person's 'inner speech' and suggests a method of exploring the possibilities of the impact the presence of Heteroglossia in all utterances may have on someone. He invites us to,

'[i]magine a dialogue of two persons in which the statements of the second speaker are omitted, but in such a way that the general sense is not at all violated. The second speaker is present, invisibly, his words are not there, but deep traces left by these

words have a determining influence on all the present and visible words of the first speaker. We sense that this is a conversation, although only one person is speaking, and it is a conversation of the most intense kind, for each present, uttered word responds and reacts with its every fiber to the invisible speaker, points to something outside itself, beyond its own limits, to the unspoken words of another person (Bakhtin, 1984b: 197).

Bakhtin's sentiment here (despite them having some fundamental differences in stance over a number of ideas) resonates significantly with Vygotsky's thoughts about 'inner speech'. Krasny suggests that the 'intra-psychological functioning implicit in inner and egocentric speech' (Krasny, 2002: 46) rests on Bakhtin's epistemological belief that the social and the utterance are inextricably linked. Following this, Vygotsky's thoughts on the subject seem to render Bakhtin's social theory of utterance all the more prominent. This is most visible in Vygotsky's assertion that,

> 'When we speak of a process, 'external' means 'social. Any higher mental function was external because it was at some point before becoming an internal, truly mental function…All higher mental functions are internalized social relationships…Their composition, genetic structure, and means of action…is social. Even when we turn to mental processes, their nature remains quasi-social. In their own private sphere, human beings retain the functions of social interaction' (1981: 162-164).

The notion of inner speech being essentially social, as persuasively argued by Bakhtin and Vygotsky, is the reason I decided to utilize created dialogues (Sullivan, 2012) with an invisible other in the analysis. I wanted to highlight the inherent socialness of our words and analyse the significance of this in relation to perceptions of and perspectives on young children's humour and the other themes that form part of this research. I reasoned that employing this strategy was an apt way to do so.

The major unit of analysis in Bakhtin's framework is the utterance and he makes a clear distinction between the structural linguistic symbols (e.g. at the level of the phone, or the phrase, or the sentence structure), most studied at his time, and the nature of the utterance. While linguistic units are neutral (in other words, they cannot contain social evaluations or emotional-volitional tone, which is an important feature of voice as Bakhtin construes this notion), the utterance is described as active and alive.

Sullivan's approach of using KMs is classified by using 'utterance' as the unit of analysis. As Sullivan puts it 'KMs are an utterance of significance' (2012: 72) and utterances differ from a sentence or word via their addressivity and answerability (Bakhtin, 1986). Helin (2013) suggests that using utterance as a unit of analysis provides opportunity to heed 'Bakhtin's suggestion for approaching relationality…through paying attention to utterance chains in the unfolding' (2013: 226). This is possible because 'an utterance ends when the speaker makes room for an active responsive understanding to be developed' meaning 'a response does not necessarily need to be in the form of spoken words; it can be silence, or something else that passes as an appropriate response in the dialogic moment' (2013: 226). In addition, given their flexible parameters, it is possible that a word imbued with intention and reactivity can be an utterance, as can a chapter in a book (Bakhtin, 1986). Further support for utterance being a fitting unit of analysis within dialogic research comes from Wertsch, (1998:50) who argue that it is the 'real unit of speech communication'. The analytic approach adopted in this study is encapsulated in Fig 14.
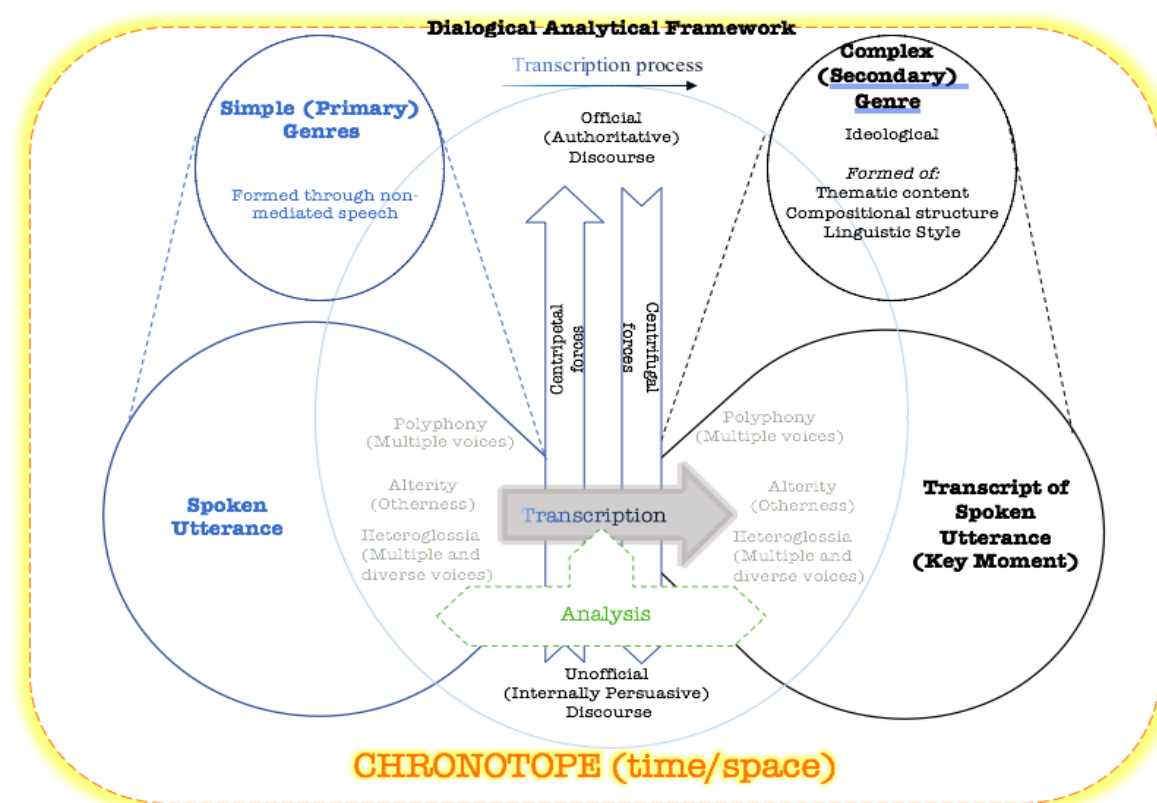
Fig 14. Analytic framework

4.6.3.6 Key Moments (KMs)

The KMs in this study were chosen using a set of general criteria focusing on content. Sullivan argues that this it is possible to decide upon specific criteria in dialogic research based on a bureaucratic relevance to research questions and a charismatic interest in the ideas contained with the utterance (Sullivan, 2012). The KMs from the Dialogic Encounters were consequently selected based on the following criteria: i) anecdotes about experiences of or with humour; ii) descriptions or analyses of children' humour; iii) responses to humour or ideas associated with humour. The KMs from the observations of children's humour were chosen due to their illustration of children's engagement with humour: humour being categorized by the presence of laughter or smiling, in response to laughter being the driving force of Bakhtin's carnivalesque (Bakhtin, 1984).

Chapter 5

Analysis of an underworld

An analysis
'Roi pour rire'
('For laughter's sake')
Francois Rabelais

Key to icons used within this chapter

	The carnivalesque genre and chronotope.
	Soundbite: excerpts from the data brought together under a particular theme.
	KM: an utterance – utterance being the unit of analysis in this study.
	Created conversation: Excerpts of participants voices pieced together to illustrate a theme across a large section of data.
	Created conversation that involves dialogue with an invisible other.

Fig 15

This chapter offers an analysis from multiple perspectives to reflect the intersubjective nature of the interactions presented and reflected upon by all participants in the study. Using utterance as the unit of analysis, salient and pertinent utterances from the data are presented here as KMs (from here on referred to as KMs). The KMs were chosen after reading through the entire data set looking for utterances that were rich with examples of a range of Bakhtinian dialogic concepts, as outlined in the previous chapter. The KMs appear in this chapter in the centre of the page. This formatting represents the central role that the participant researchers' voices have within this analysis. It is important for the participant researchers' voices to be privileged within this study as there is significant potential for their voices to be undermined or over-ridden by my own authoritative researcher voice and the authoritative voices within the literature and theory (Sullivan, 2012). This would neglect the polyphonic, heteroglot context in which the 'heroes' are being authored within this research and hence become monologic: the antithesis of dialogism (Bakhtin, 1984b). As noted in the outline of the methodological approach the utterances are presented throughout the chapter predominantly as KMs. They also appear via a variety of other dialogic methodological devices throughout the analysis: soundbites, or smaller selections of data brought together as they speak on a pertinent theme in an interesting way; created dialogues and created dialogues with an invisible other, both detailed in the methodology, and both of which highlight the dialogic nature of the utterances by decontextualizing and then re-contextualising them to provide a fresh perspective (Sullivan, 2012).

Threaded through this chapter are Bakhtinian analyses of both the children's and practitioners' voices that draw on and are consistently in touch with the voices of both the children and the practitioners in addition to my own voice. This is an attempt to avoid doing research 'on' the participants instead of researching 'with' them (White, 2013). The strong ethical stance that underpins a Bakhtinian dialogic approach to research asks that researchers respond sensitively to the potential that research has to finalise participants, or to present their voices in such a way as to suggest we can 'know' the participants' viewpoints. This would be a monologic approach to authoring the participants (PDP) and would, therefore, pledge allegiance to the antithesis of this study's approach.

Here the children's experiences of and thoughts about humour are focused on closely, as are the practitioners' professional reflections and analysis of these, coupled with my own analysis guided by a Bakhtinian dialogic lens. All of the data presented here are framed

within a carnivalesque genre and chronotope thereby addressing the first research question, which specifically asks about the nature and manifestations of young children's humour in a nursery setting and adult reactions and responses. Framing the data in this way also provides the beginnings of a justification for reflecting upon young children's humour using a Bakhtinian carnivalesque lens.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the analysis was organised into two rounds and data from both rounds feature in this analysis. Not all elements of the data collected feature here as the scope of the study did not facilitate this, due to the large quantity of data collected.

To revisit the research design, briefly, each round involved the following steps:

1. The children's every day encounters were filmed via the use of head cameras worn by all participant researchers (children, PRs and researcher - me). Examples of humour (classified by the presence of laughter and/or smiling cues – Provine, 2008) were collected and transcribed into KMs to be analysed and discussed in the Dialogic Encounters (DE1s and DE2s) with the PRs and children.

2. I engaged in Biographical Dialogic Encounters (BDEs) with the PRs. These initial encounters were designed to find out about the PRs' experiences with and perceptions of humour throughout their childhoods and adult lives; their thoughts about the nature of and significance of humour and laughter inside and outside of ECEC; and to discuss how they came to be ECEC practitioners. This initial encounter was an important beginning to the data collection process and was designed to set the scene for the PRs and I to explore young children's humour and their responses to it via a Currere (Pinaar, 2004) inspired method. Akin to method that involves autobiographical reflection on experiences with education that shape our understanding of self in society (Pinaar, 2004), the BDEs were designed as an opportunity for the PRs to reflect on their experiences of humour throughout their lives, explore their personal relationships with humour and begin to link this to their views on young children's humour and its place within ECEC culture and pedagogy.

3. DE1 - this encounter took place after the observations and after the first analysis which was conducted by me as the lead researcher, during which I scanned the videos

for examples of humour and created KMs out of that process. During this encounter the practitioners and I watched the collection of KMs on the video and analysed what was happening and whether something was significant.

4. DE2 - the purpose of this encounter was to revisit Dialogic Encounter one, sometime after it had taken place, to check whether any thoughts had changed or whether the practitioners or I thought that we had seen our ideas had been misrepresented in Dialogic Encounter one. In a sense, it was a form of member checking which Sullivan suggests has an important role within dialogic research, due to the recognition of the presence of multiple voices (heteroglossia, DI) and their hierarchical positions in relation to one another (polyphony, DI; Sullivan, 2012).

5. And, lastly, the dialogic analysis journal - I provided the PRs with a dialogic analysis journal that included transcripts of all the encounters we had shared, alongside data from the children. The idea was to provide the PRs with a further opportunity to ensure that their voices were being represented in a way with which they were comfortable.

The first part of this chapter includes analysis of all of these elements of each round of data collection, although not necessarily in chronological order as the analysis is organized by genre and chronotope (with an emphasis on genre) in the first section, and chronotope and genre in the second (with an emphasis on chronotope). This structure facilitated a more participant centred focus.

Importantly, for the first round of data collection I did not introduce the practitioners to Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque; instead, asking them to create their own categories to frame the children' humour in the filmed KMs we watched. This was to allow the practitioners, in the first instance, time to think more deeply about their own understanding of humour and children's humour and, as part of this, to experience the process of categorizing the humour they observed. The methodological decision to support initial reflection and categorization before introducing concepts from the theory of carnivalesque is supported by White (2009) who reminds us that it can take a considerable amount of time to become familiar enough with a new theory to apply it meaningfully to everyday situations. In addition, having drawn on specific comments the practitioners made during the Biographic

Dialogic Encounters at the start of the project, I was aware that they felt the need to get used to thinking about theory in detail, not having had the opportunity to engage with theory for some time.

After watching the videos of the KMs highlighting moments of humour, as seen from the perspectives of those involved, the practitioners created the following categories as being characteristic of the KMs in the first round of data: feel good, jolly, physical, nonsense, silliness, playing with words and sounds, energetic, cheeky, developing own sense of humour, toilet humour exploring humour, social element and testing boundaries. These were generated by watching the videos of the KMs that involved examples of children and their humour and writing down on a pre-prepared table words that they thought reflected the nature of the humour within those KMs. The process by which the practitioners generated the humour types is discussed in more detail in Part Two of this chapter.

5.1 KM DE1 "I fell on my bottom!"

We begin with a KM that focuses on the children watching and responding to video footage of all KMs in Round One of the data collection process. The video footage was presented in the polyphonic video format (White, 2009) which saw head camera footage from multiple children displayed side-by-side and playing simultaneously (see still image example, below).

KM DE1 'I fell on my bottom'

(This formed part of the Dialogic Encounter with the children. It is important to note that DE1 with the children was not recorded using the polyphonic video technique for ethical reasons - there were children present who did not have parental permission to be part of this study and may have been inadvertently filmed had children been wearing head cameras - thus, the discussion and analysis of DE1 does not include reference to the technique.)

The children are sitting around a laptop waiting to watch
films of themselves that were captured from the head cameras
they wore during the observation process. The films are made up

of more than one screen, each screen showing the images from an
individual head camera or from one of the static cameras—see the screenshot in Fig 19.

Imogen: Oliver's on it. (In the video, Oliver is dancing and then slips,
falling on to the floor).

VIDEO: Oliver: I fell on my bottom! (smiles). Elsa: You fell on your bottom? Oooooh.

(Sebastian laughs and Oliver, Imogen and Annabelle smile, then Oliver looks at Laura).

Laura: (With a neutral facial expression) You fell on your bottom, Oliver.

(Oliver smiles, walks away from the laptop and falls over exaggeratedly, whilst laughing.
Annabelle watches him and then exaggeratedly falls off the child-sized sofa. Laura, now
smiling) Are you falling again?

Oliver: Yeah (smiles and comes back and sits down on front of the screen).

I want to see me again.

Laura: You want to see you again? (The other children do not seem keen to do as
Oliver suggests) Well, we've got another one here and I think Nathaniel is in this one...

(The video continues to play and all the children watch the screen as Nathaniel is
singing in the video. Oliver then jumps up and falls onto the floor, exaggeratedly, once again.
He turns back to the screen smiling. Oliver laughs and Sebastian laughs, too. Sebastian jumps
up and falls onto the floor.)

Imogen: It goes like this, (falls on to the floor) buuurrrr (smiles).

THE OVERT VOICES PRESENT IN THE UTTERANCE (represented by individuals'
head-camera-stickers and individual interests)

OLIVER

ANNABELLE

SEBASTIAN

IMOGEN

NATHANIAL

5.1.1 I fell on my bottom' - a practitioner perspective

KM from Ana and Bulda DE1

Laura: Oliver laughs when he says 'I fell on my bottom'. Why is that funny in your opinion?

Bulda: Well, it's almost like adults watching…

You've Been Framed…it's that, that, slapstick humour isn't it…

Ana: Energetic…not necessarily based on language…

Bulda: No, no…

Ana: It's more of a…

Bulda: It's more of an active-y thing isn't it?

Ana: Yeah.

Bulda: Yeah…laughing at each other WITH each other, 'cause obviously he wasn't hurt because he'd have been upset…

Laura: Yeah, that's interesting, because Oliver laughed as well, didn't he?

Bulda: Yeah.

Laura: But sometimes I think if people hurt themselves…

Bulda: He might have got cross if they'd have laughed.

Laura: People might laugh but the person themself isn't laughing

Bulda: Yeah.

Ana: Yeah. Yeah. And whether they'd have laughed if he had hurt himself…it would have been different. If he hadn't have laughed as well…and then, you know, he would have been upset, it would have been interesting to see if they'd have laughed or not.

Bulda: Yeah.

Ana: Whether they'd have found it funny…

Bulda: Yeah.

Laura: Yeah, that would have been interesting…and how do you think…how do you think you might have reacted if…?

Ana: The same, I think…

Bulda: Yeah, might have said, 'oo are you alright?' but then…

Ana: If he'd have laughed…but if he didn't laugh then I might have said '^ooo, never mind, up you jump' and all those kinda…

Bulda: Shivying him up kinda…

Ana: Yeah. Yeah.

Bulda: (quietly) getting on with it.

Ana: But then maybe be careful just in case it did go wrong…BECAUSE they kind of have to learn that, yeah, those things can be funny but obviously try not to do it too much because you could hurt yourself (laughs…B smiles).

5.1.2 A Bakhtinian analysis of 'I fell on my bottom'

Table 1, below, (as with all the subsequent analysis summary tables in this chapter) maps out an overview of the Key Moment in relation to the genre and discourse, emotional register of learning/truth, time-space elaboration of genre (or chronotope), and context, from a Bakhtinian perspective (Sullivan, 2013).

5.1.2 Dialogical map of 'I fell on my bottom'

BAKHTINIAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE FOR 'I FELL ON MY BOTTOM'					
Participants	KM	Generic features/ Discourse	Emotional Register of learning/truth	Time-space elaboration (chronotope)	Context
Esme, Annabelle, Alice, Oliver, Sebastian, Dave, Nathaniel, Yanto and Laura (me)	Dialogic Encounter 1 (Child participants)	Performance, free communication between unlikely individuals, clowning, mimicry	Humour/the comic, joy, denial, uncertainty, togetherness	Reflecting on the past, time as full of potential	Organised Dialogic Encounter – the children watched the video on own volition and were free to stop watching at any point.

Fig 16

5.1.3 General Analysis

"I fell on my bottom" can be characterised as embodying the carnivalesque genre and exhibiting a carnivalesque discourse, due to the children's (in particular, Oliver, Annabelle and Esme's) engagement in playful performance where a blurring of boundaries between the performers and the audience occurs. Bakhtin argues that 'carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 6) illustrating that a performance in which the boundaries are blurred could be described as carnivalesque. Further, he suggests that '[c]arnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people' (ibid.), an idea that reflects Annabelle and Esme's acts of mimicking Oliver falling over and their apparent display of an emotional register of desire to be part of the performance.

Further evidence of the carnivalesque nature of this KM comes from the instances of clowning that can be seen. Oliver's staged fall—after seeing himself fall over in the film— and Annabelle and Esme's mimicry, embody the idea of carnivalesque performance as acts of clowning. Bakhtin stipulates that clowning and fools 'are characteristic of the medieval culture of humor' and that in medieval times clowns and fools were 'constant, accredited representatives of the carnival spirit in everyday life out of carnival season' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 8) illustrating that the children' 'performances' could be described as being carnivalesque in spirit, and as inhabiting a chronotope in which time is full of potential. I argue that clowns represent a sense of 'standing on the borderline between life and art' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 8), thus placing the children in a position to play their roles however they wish and, importantly, in a space which is outside of any perceived need to be understood by others.

Previous experience of the children's friendship groups, coupled with testimonies from the PRs, suggests that the alliance between Oliver, Esme and Annabelle was not necessarily a common occurrence. The data indicates that a shared desire to engage in a humourous carnivalesque performance brought them together, an idea that Bakhtin argues reflects the essence of relationships and communication within carnivals, where 'a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 10).

Perhaps significant to Oliver recreating his fall was the fact that I highlighted the act. Oliver does not react immediately to seeing himself fall over in the video. He looks over at me, as if

checking to see what my reaction is. It is possible that my comment inspired Oliver to recreate the moment he fell over in the video, potentially, because of his initial perception that I was someone who would usually reside above Oliver in the nursery social hierarchy. My comment seemingly removed any hierarchical boundaries between me and Oliver as it identified an action often found in the slapstick humour genre, and a part of the body that falls into Bakhtin's theory of the 'lower bodily strata'. Both ideas embody a carnivalesque view of the world: a view that Oliver may have perceived as not usually adopted by adults. This suggestion is supported by the soundbite, below, taken from a Dialogic Encounter with the practitioners where they discuss childrens's perceptions of normative adult behaviour.

5.1.3.1 Soundbite

G: I think they [children] find it funny when grown-ups say...something that they know is ...°silly.

Laura: Why do you think that is?

G: Perhaps, more the children...

Elsa: I don't know but they do though...(small laugh).

G: (smiles) They DO don't they? Because if we're...if they say something and we find it funny and maybe they haven't, and we repeat it, suddenly it's funny.

Elsa: Yeah

Laura: So there's a...

G: Perhaps grown-ups shouldn't be...silly

(Elsa and Gerda, DE1)

The notion of time being full of potential pours through this KM. Arguably, it is most evident in the children's enjoyment of watching themselves on the screen; the re-enactment of past events they are reminded of by the video; and the contagious nature of their smiles and laughter. The children's shared experiences of reminiscing, re-enactment and humour within the KM embody a sense of potential, possibly highlighting for the children that things are never finished, never completed, and can be renewed (Bakhtin, 1984a). In essence, old experiences can become new experiences and be played with all over again: a theme which is central within a carnivalesque view of the world.

For ethical and methodological reasons (Tallant, 2015), it is important to note the final column of the analysis table: the context. I fell on my bottom took place in a familiar

environment for the children and one where I was a visitor and where they welcomed me into what they viewed as 'their' space. This offered them an opportunity to feel an element of control. I asked all the children, individually, if they would like to watch a video of themselves and that, if they did, it would be playing over in the corner of the room. Once a group of children had sat down waiting for the video to play, I asked if any of them minded me playing a video that starred all of them, and whether they minded all of us watching it. In addition, I reminded them that they could, at any time, ask me to stop the video if they changed their minds and that they were free to stop watching the video whenever they chose. A number of children did just that, returning later when they deemed something of interest might be occurring. That they felt free (Bakhtin, 1984a) and at liberty to dip in and out of the screening is another indication that the carnivalesque genre was at play in I fell on my bottom.

5.2 KM 'Dinosaurs and bird poo'

Simon: (laughing)...you couldn't go in there with
that bird poo. But you could clean the bird poo up and
put it in a bucket. Laura: Oh, and where would I put
the bird poo then? Sian: (shouts)
IN THE DINOSAUR'S MOUTH (laughs).
Laura: (In an exaggerated tone)
In the dinosaur's mouth (laughs)? Simon: No, in the sink (laughs).
Laura: In the sink (smiles). What would happen to the sink if I
put all of that bird poo down there? Simon: (smiling) It would
be smelly (laughs). You could put it in the bath (laughs). Laura: We
could put it in the bath – hmmm (smiles). Sian: Just do it (smiles).
Laura: A bath is for getting us clean. If we put bird poo in it, do you
think a bath would get us clean? Simon: You can put soap in bird
poo (smiles). Laura: Hmmm – or perhaps it should just stay outside?
Sian: Yeah, I think so. Laura: Do you think so? Simon: Yeah, so the
birds can eat it (laughs). Sian laughs, too. The practitioners ask
all the children to tidy up because it is time for lunch. Simon:
(to me) Do I have to tidy up now? Laura: We all do because it's
lunch time.

THE OVERT VOICES PRESENT IN THE UTTERANCE (represented by individuals'

head-camera-stickers and individual interests):

SIMON   SIAN   LAURA

5.2.1 'Dinosaurs and Bird poo' - A practitioner perspective

KM from Dialogic Encounter with PPA and PPB

PPB: That's just a typical Simon comment really...

PPA: Yeah, anything that come out of his mouth...

PPB: He'll often...at the dinner table he'll always sit there and say things like that, and you're
like, 'be sensible Simon' (laughs). Random things...It's just, usually in play it wouldn't
normally matter but because they were at the dinner table, and then when he says something
then they all start saying things and that sort of then gets a bit more than what he just started
it as.

Laura: So, it escalates and everyone else gets quite excited?

PPB: Yeah so then we have to say, 'ok, calm down and eat your dinner' (laughs).

A Bakhtinian analysis of 'Dinosaurs and bird poo'

5.2.2 A dialogical map of 'Dinosaurs and bird poo'

BAKHTINIAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE FOR DINOSAURS AND BIRD POO					
Participants	KM	Genres and Discourse	Emotional Register of learning/truth	Time-space elaboration (chronotope)	Context
Simon, Sian and Laura (me)	Dinosaurs and Bird Poo	Carnivlaesque – grotesque body, anti-reality, degradation, clowning Inside-out discourse (anti-authoritative, irreverent)	Humour/the comic Joy Jouissance (Barthes, 1975) Displeasure	Time as full of potential and uncertainty Awareness of burgeoning sense of self in relation to the outside world	Free-play Getting to know an unfamiliar adult Moving between carnivalesque and 'real world' spaces

			Moral Satisfaction Personal Power		

Fig 17

5.2.3 General Analysis

In this KM we observe two children, Simon and Sian aged 4 and 3, respectively, and me - the researcher. The play, which featured all three of us and was focused around a large tray of porridge oats, seemed to create a moment in which the children accepted me as an equal in the humorous encounter. The children were interacting with plastic dinosaurs in the oats and initiated a dialogue about where dinosaurs lived. After spotting a poster on the wall about birds, the children suggested some dinosaurs lived in nests. The dialogue moved on to explore what else might live in a nest. It was at this point, specifically when the children proffered that a nest might be my home, that the conversation developed a carnivalesque hue.

The imaginary scenes that the children engage in illustrate an engagement with their 'right to emerge from the routine of life, the right to be free from all that is official and consecrated', a state Bakhtin suggests is 'typically carnivalesque from beginning to end' (1984b: 257). In addition, the children enjoy delving into grotesque imagery. Cohen reminds us that, 'carnival abuses and the term grotesque were not negative for Bakhtin, rather they connected to real life as a way to mock fear and generate renewal and rebirth' (Cohen, 2011: 192) and the occurrence of ideas of this nature helps us to classify this KM as carnivalesque. The children seem to experience a great deal of pleasure from engaging with grotesque imagery. Daniel (2006) argues that this can be likened to Barthes' (1975) concept of 'jouissance' as emphasised by Kenway and Bullen (2001) and that Grace and Tobin suggest is '...an intense, heightened form of pleasure, involving a momentary loss of subjectivity. It knows no bounds' (Grace and Tobin, 1997: 177). Moreover, Bakhtin contends that '[t]he comic, in general, is based upon the contrast between the feeling of pleasure and displeasure...'. It could be argued that we see in the KM an opportunity for, 'displeasure…caused by the impossible and improbable nature of the image...'. This occurs when the subject of bird poo in a dinosaur's mouth is raised. However, '...this feeling is overcome by two forms of pleasure: first [the children] find some place for this exaggeration in reality' (Bakhtin, 1984b: 306) through comments that challenge pervasive cultural norms: namely those that are reinforced by adults and that dictate the types of behaviour that are socially acceptable, or not (Tallant, 2015).

'Second...' Bakhtin tells us, '[the children may] feel a moral satisfaction' (Bakhtin, 1984: 306) gleaned, perhaps, 'from having joked successfully with incongruous and grotesque images in the face of prevailing discourses that frame this kind of humour as 'inappropriate', as well as in the face of the adults who perpetuate and embody these discourses' (Tallant, 2015). Further, Bakhtin indicates that '[t]he essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity' (Bakhtin, 1984b: 20). The children's enjoyment of grotesque images here, and elsewhere in the data, illustrates their engagement with material bodies and corporeality and its role as an opportunity for them to relish the sense of expertise it affords – after all, we are all experts on our own bodies. Engaging with grotesque realism in this way, it appears, presents Sian and Simon with the chance to feel empowered when in their everyday lives they likely experience a lack of power. Here, they can demean adult authority through engagement with ideas that dominant cultural discourses hold as distasteful, savouring the power that goes with having control over their own bodies. The children may connect with this experience in particular because as children of 3 and 4 years old, they will likely have only relatively recently gained understanding of and control over their bladders and bowels. This awareness and power may facilitate a feeling of empowerment fuelled by their own corporeal awareness. Loizou's argument, that power is a fundamental feature of humour that children utilise to negotiate their social surroundings (Loizou, 2007), resonates here.

Another carnivalesque theme present in this KM is nonsense; more specifically, something Kennedy terms, 'loose nonsense' (Kennedy, 1991) or playing with shifting the laws of nature in a haphazard way. For example, the conversation about people not wishing to live with bird poo seems logical at first, but morphs into a discussion about bird poo in a dinosaur's mouth. Simon appears determined to bring logic back to the dialogue by making a sensible proposition that we might put the bird poo in the sink – somewhere he identifies as clean, unlike poo. Once again, however, nonsense trickles back into the conversation through Simon's idea that this would be smelly, and that it should go in the bath. The carnivalesque presents here in multiple ways: firstly, carnival is the definitive anti-reality - an illogical world; secondly, nonsense establishes a sense of turning the world on its head (Bakhtin, 1984b). The children's playing with ideas also resonates with notions of clowning. Sian's remark that we could put the bird poo in the dinosaur's mouth appears especially playful and gives the scent of performance and playing the fool (Bakhtin, 1984b).

For Bakhtin, carnival is egalitarian and a time for communication between all. At first, the children had demonstrated an awareness of hierarchy and treated me as an additional practitioner, whose status signalled an ability to sanction or overrule their behaviour. However, during our play, our conversation sauntered into carnivalesque space, intimating that I transformed from 'authority figure' to 'equal' in the children' eyes. After PPA signalled it was time to prepare for lunch, Simon checked with me whether he had to tidy up. This effected a shift from our carnivalesque play space back to reality, where hierarchy returned and I was placed in the perceived role of 'practitioner' again. As a result, for Simon, I was an appropriately authority figure to provide him with an answer. For Bakhtin, the time and spaces of carnivals propagate equality, free and familiar interaction between people and carnivalistic misalliances. Subsequently, although outside the carnivalesque space the children and I were separated by hierarchy, within it we were equals (Bakhtin, 1984b). The children's contentment for my position as an authority figure to become distorted could suggest that their nursery provides a safe space in which they can learn about social order and practice communicating within it. Further, in the nursery space children may project imaginary identities onto practitioners to test out the social acceptability of children engaging in certain behaviours or using particular language. For example, practitioners may be positioned by children as authority figures, friends or adversaries. Children using adults to test hypotheses about the social acceptability of behaviours is supported by Sutton-Smith who argues that children engage in 'testing play' as, '...a form of self- validation' (Sutton Smith, 1970: 9). It is possible, therefore, that children may project different identities onto practitioners depending on the nature of their tests (Tallant, 2015). Further, it may depend on whether children perceive the environment as a sweeping Rabelais-esque carnival in which practitioners are a part, or as an underground realm that only children populate, outside the official world they occupy alongside adults for the majority of the time (Bakhtin, 1984). Other data from this study demonstrate that children may do both. For example, in the scenario below, the children are sitting around a table eating at snack time, away from the gaze of adults, who are busy preparing the snack. This lends the soundbite an air of 'underground' as we would not have known about the exchange had it not been caught on film by the children's head cameras.

Louis walks through the door of the nursery whilst the children are sitting in groups, at

tables, with their snack.

Oscar: (Calling) Loooouis (distorted speech).

Yanto: Hello Louis.

Oscar: Hello Louis poois (laughs).

Nathanial: Yanto, Oscar said Louis poo...pooooois._

THE OVERT VOICES PRESENT IN THE UTTERANCE (represented by individuals'

head-camera-stickers and individual interests)

OSCAR   LOUIS   NATHANIAL   YANTO

Here, it might be said that Oscar's carnivalesque greeting of Louis was mildly abusive given he is using grotesque imagery in 'name-calling'. Bakhtin argues that carnival abuses do not have the negative connotations we might associate with them. In this carnival space I argue that Oscar is not being vindictive or cruel to Louis; he is playing with words, names as labels, sounds and grotesque imagery in the spirit of carnivality. The enjoyment and inherent positivity within this occurrence is heightened by the lack of adults in this scenario, as this adds to the depth of carnivalesque experience. Conversely, the soundbite and KM, below, paint an altogether different picture of carnivality where a practitioner is joining in, and being welcomed into, the children's carnival:

5.2.3.2 Soundbite from KM 'Eggs, beans and sausages'

Elsa: Emily's been a good girl too. (Emily is laughing, and Elsa laughs too. The camera pans around and shows Eloise smiling.). What is she doing? Well she's giggling actually. She's giggling in my ear. (Emily continues to laugh). Yes. She's being cheeky too. Bye bye. Ooooo, it's my nanna now. My nanny's on the phone. You talk to my nanna.

Emily: Hello, bye bye (laughs and Eloise laughs too).

Elsa: (laughs) you've not said hello to my nanny...

Eloise: (mimes taking the phone from Elsa) hello, bye bye (laughs and Elsa laughs).

Elsa: Can you tell her what I've been doing?

Emily: It's my, it's my ya ya (laughs).

Elsa: (smiling) It's what?

Emily: (laughing) It's my (Eloise laughs) ya ya. (all laugh).

Elsa: Who's ya ya? (all laugh). What does ya ya mean?

THE OVERT VOICES PRESENT IN THE UTTERANCE (represented by individuals'
head-camera-stickers and individual interests)

EMILY   ELOISE

ELSA

The following KM also involves an adult as part of the children's carnivalesque scene. Here, not only is the adult (me) part of the children's carnival, but the children enjoy playing with grotesque imagery, and, as also highlighted in KM Dinosaurs and poo, in this KM they seem to exhibit a similar experience of jouissance.

 5.2.3.3 KM Sticky play dough

The children are sitting around a table, with me, playing with some
very sticky and gooey home-made play dough.

Sebastian: It can stick on your hand. And I got it stuck on my finger.

Megan: And it can stick on your face (smiles).

Laura: (Smiling) It can stick on your ^face?

Emily: And it can stick on your head (smiles).

Laura: Your ^head (smiles)?

Sebastian: And it can stick on your knickers.

All the children laugh, loudly.

Laura: On your knickers?

All the children laugh even more loudly

Emily: And on your arm (smiles).

Sebastian: (smiling) And ↑your bottom. And your bottom.

Laura: On my ^bottom? My goodness. That would be uncomfortable.

Megan: And on Sebastian's bottom (giggles).

All the children laugh.

THE CHILDREN (AND RESEARCHER)

(represented by their head-camera-stickers)

EMILY SEBASTIAN MEGAN LAURA

In two of the examples above, as in KM 'Dinosaurs and Bird Poo', the children have assigned adults a role as 'fellow carnival-goer' who is not above them in the social hierarchy in the interaction. Further, as the children's awareness of the status gap between them and the adult outside of the game grows, the sense of enjoyment they feel when the adult joins them in their carnivalesque foolery potentially heightens their pleasure and is empowering. Lastly, in all of the examples involving adults, the children may be assigning the adults different roles in an attempt to negotiate the presence of 'multiple voices within the adults (and all) utterances' (Holquist, 2002: x_). This instance seems to represent myriad messages about status and power and is in response to the existence of 'hidden dialogicality': meaning that 'each present, uttered word responds and reacts with its every fiber to...[an]... invisible speaker, points to something outside itself, beyond its own limits, to the unspoken words of another person' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 197). If the children are attempting to elicit a sense of what lies beyond the immediate situation, in this way, it may facilitate an exploration and subsequent expansion of their understanding of the rules of the social world.

5.3 KM – Cups

PPA: You haven't eaten much rice today?

Weren't you hungry? Aren't you hungry for your yoghurt then?

James: Yeah (throws head back and laughs then looks at Oliver).

Oliver throws his head back and laughs as well, then looks at James.

The practitioner is engaged in a conversation with

children on the other table. Oliver looks at the practitioner, turns

around and says in a staged voice:

Oliver: I've got 1 toilet at home.

Imogen: I've got a pink cup (her cup is green).

Still using the staged voice, Oliver points at Imogen's cup.

Oliver: Pink.

Imogen: Green (smiles).

Oliver:

(Still using a staged voice) No, pink (smiles).

I've got a yellow one (his cup is blue).

THE OVERT VOICES PRESENT IN THE UTTERANCE

(represented by images of individual interests):

JAMES   IMOGEN   PRACTITIONER A

OLIVER

5.3.1 *'Cups' – a practitioner perspective*

'He'll often...at the dinner table he'll always sit there and say things like that, and you're like, 'be sensible Simon' (laughs). Random things...It's just, usually in play it wouldn't normally matter but because they were at the dinner table, and then when he says something then they all start saying things   and that sort of then gets a bit more than what he just started it as.' PPB DE

5.3.2 A dialogic map of 'Cups'

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">Bakhtinian analysis summary table of 'Cups'</td></tr>
<tr><td>Participants</td><td>KM</td><td>Genres and Discourse</td><td>Emotional Register of learning/truth</td><td>Time-space elaboration (chronotope)</td><td>Context</td></tr>
<tr><td>PPA, James, Oliver, Imogen</td><td>Cups</td><td>Carnivalesque genre - clowning, mimicry, subversion Inside-out discourse (anti-authoritative, irreverent) Double-voiced discourse</td><td>Humour Joy Connectedness with peers</td><td>Time as full of potential and uncertainty</td><td>Lunchtime Interaction with peers and practitioner</td></tr>
</table>

Fig 18

5.3.3 General Analysis

While not limited to these moments, there is a variety of evidence that suggests carnivalesque humour flourishes during mealtimes, as in the KM above (Tallant, 2015). The humour present in 'Cups' has a range of carnivalesque features, that help to frame it within the genre.

The children appear to personify the spirit of clowning, demonstrating examples of mimicry, when Oliver copies James by laughing after throwing his head back; 'playful performance' and 'playing the fool', exemplified by James' staged voice; and possible subversion (although this is speculative) when James glances at the practitioner, notices her attention is not on him, and then turns to another child to have fun by clowning (Bakhtin, 1984). This speculation is reinforced by Da Silva Iddings and MacAfferty (2007) whose study also involved young children's enjoyment of subversive behaviour. Further, evidence of a 'double-voiced discourse' (Bakhtin, 1984a) is identifiable within this suggested subversive behaviour when Oliver comments 'I've got one toilet at home' as this may be a response to a hidden practitioner voice, disapproving of scatological talk at the table, as his comment occurs in a lunchtime context. The excerpt from the KM (above) strengthens this, particularly when PPB says:

'…usually in play it wouldn't normally matter but because they were at the dinner table…'

These comments point towards a reluctance to welcome certain themes and behaviour in a meal context i.e. 'the dinner table'; instead, demonstrating apprehension when contemplating a situation where she experiences a loss of control over the children's behaviour. DaSilver Iddings and McAfferty (2007) also noted the tensions between practitioner/teacher desire for control in a classroom context and children's behaviours that the teacher anticipates might challenge this. However, practitioners' desire for control and rationality in ECEC settings may be at odds with what they really want for young children. In the soundbites, below, Elsa emphasises what is of value to her in her capacity as ECEC practitioner, emphasising,

'I think the most important thing is to get...when the children come in...to make them happy. I think that is the most important thing' (Elsa).

She goes on to mention her awareness of supporting children in preparation for their next phase, suggesting that,

'Everything comes from being happy and settled and we give them the tools to do that and when they go on to school' (Elsa).

However, significantly, her personal values concerning her views on the role of practitioners being to ensure children's happiness, comfort and to facilitate their developing friendships, come through at the end of utterance, after what seems to be a response to hidden dialogicality. She is discussing that children are ready to learn by the time they leave the ECEC setting to go to school, when she appears to be interrupted and subsequently feel the need to qualify that she is not suggesting the children do not learn through play at nursery. She says,

'I think they're [children] always ready to learn and... I mean, they learn lots here, don't get me wrong, we learn a lot through play, but a lot of it is to make sure they are comfortable and happy and make friendships...' (Elsa).

Here, Elsa seems to respond to a voice that assumes her initial emphasis on children being 'ready to learn' might mean that she does not think children do, or perhaps should, learn whilst they attend an ECEC setting. She clarifies that and emphasises her view that children 'learn lots here…through play' but finishes with her main point (before the interruption), that practitioners' have a responsibility to ensure children's comfort, happiness and successful friendships: suggesting that these relate closely to her own personal and professional values. That the PRs do not perceive children's time in an ECEC setting is focused on 'school-readiness' is seconded by Elsa, Gerda and Ana when, 2 years later, (collectively, as they explained that '[d]ue to a busy period at Nursery, we have looked at your questions together and have jointly responded. Sorry it's taken so long. Elsa, Gerda and Ana'), they said,

'[c]hildhood is about learning and having experiences to enable them [children] to grow and develop into well rounded young adults...' adding that part of the practitioner role is 'to guide them [children], [and] talk about feelings and emotions' (Elsa, Gerda and Ana).

The soundbites above suggest that, as a collective, the PRs overall focus and values are not necessarily predicated upon the values of the EYFS (DfE, 2012) that privilege school-readiness over attending to children's immediate selves. Although, the comments do have the sense of a progressive chronotope that highlights children's state as transitory, via their emphasis on growth, development and becoming 'well rounded adults'. Arguably this future-

orientated authoritative rhetoric is difficult to avoid given the discourse of children as human becomings' (Qvortrup, 2005) that permeates ECEC policy, curricula and, arguably, wider society. This has potential implications for practitioners' capacity to recognise and, more significantly, support children's carnivalesque humour, particularly given its complex, subversive, resistant (RHW) nature.

5.4 KM 'GOOD MOVES'

Elsa's Perspective = Black   Ana's Perspective = Blue

Ana and Tim are sitting down and Ana is reading Tim a story. A group of children is gathered around the computer.

Elsa is with a group of children playing at the sand tray in the other section of the room, away from the boys who are playing on the computer.

Ana: …said the wizard and with a flick of his bony fingers he turned the king and the queen and all the party guests into stone.

Nathanial: I made a train track.

The children at the computer start dancing and laughing

Ana: Oh look, they're having a dance.

Elsa: (To Nathanial) Did you? Yummy…Let me just see what the boys are doing next…door…I can hear something…

Marcus: (laughing) I'm dancing!

The children continue to dance around, laughing and shrieking

Elsa: (Smiling) What are ^you doing?

Elsa: (Smiling) Are you dancing? (Elsa: (Smiling) Are you dancing?)

Oscar laughs, loudly. (Oscar laughs, loudly).

Yanto: We're still dancing, Oscar.

The boys at the computer continue to dance and jump and laugh.

Yanto: Oscar, we're still dancing.

Oliver falls over and laughs. (Oliver falls over and laughs).

Oliver: (laughing) I fell on my ^bottom.

Ana (to Oliver): (laughs) I know…

Elsa: (Smiling) You fell on your bottom (small laugh)?

Tim: (smiling) He fell on his bottom.

Oliver: (laughing) Yeaaaah.

Ana: (Laughing) He diiiiiiiiid. Oscar's dancing…

Tim: (Smiling) He fell down on his bottom.

Ana: (smiling) He did fall down on his bottom didn't he?

Elsa: (smiling) You've got some good moves (laughs).

Ana: (smiling) Good moves Marcus… Oscar…

The children continue to dance and jump and make joyful shrieking sounds and Ana laughs.

Elsa watches the children dancing and laughs.

Yanto: (Smiling) Woooo^ooooo

Elsa: (Smiling and playing air guitar) Got my guitar… (Elsa: (Smiling and playing air guitar) Got my guitar…) *Ana laughs*

Oliver: It's finished. Oliver: It's finished.

Elsa: Is it finished?   …what does that mean then, if it's finished?(…what does that mean then, if it's finished?)

Oliver: It's my turn.

Elsa: Is it your turn? Ok then what are you going to do?

Tim: (pointing to the story book that Ana is holding) I'd like this…

Ana: Oh sorry, I was reading a story wasn't I?

Oliver: I'm gonna… *Another child speaks but what they say is inaudible.*

The clip finishes. The clip finishes.

THE OVERT VOICES PRESENT IN THE UTTERANCE

(represented by their head-camera-stickers):

ANA   OLIVER   YANTO   OSCAR   TIM   MARCUS   ELSA   NATHANIAL

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5.4.1 'Good moves' - a practitioner perspective

Fig 19

5.4.2 A dialogic map of 'Good moves'

BAKHTINIAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE OF GOOD MOVES					
Participants	KM	Genres and Discourse	Emotional Register of learning/truth	Time-space elaboration (chronotope)	Context
Elsa, Ana, Tim, Yanto, Oliver, Marcus, Nathanial, Oscar	Good Moves	Carnivalesque genre - clowning, mimicry Subversion Inside-out discourse (anti-authoritative, irreverent) Double- voiced discourse	Humour Joy Connectedness with peers	Time as full of potential and uncertainty	Child-led interaction with peers and practitioner

Fig 20

5.4.3 General Analysis

In KM Good Moves we have another example of children and adults enjoying together children's carnivalesque behaviours, including clowning and mimicry. The discourse threading through the KM is inside-out due to its carnivalesque and, therefore, anti-reality and non-hierarchical nature (Bakhtin, 1984a). This discourse also links to the KM's emotional register ringing with humour, joy and the feeling of togetherness engendered by a carnival atmosphere (Bahktin, 1984a). In addition, and significantly, we can see both Ana and Elsa's perspective of the event in the transcript because they were each wearing head cameras that recorded the KM from their individual perspectives which, arguably offers an opportunity to consider the chronotopic nature of the event as we have access to two separate perspective of the same scene. From the beginning we can see that Ana is the first to notice the children dancing and that this appears to distract her from reading a story with Tim. Shortly after this, we see that Elsa is busy engaging with Nathanial and other children around the corner from (and out of sight of) the dancers and can hear (but at that point cannot see) something is happening in the other part of the room, so she leaves the sand tray to investigate. We do not know the reason for her interest in the dancing but, given emphasis is placed upon early childhood practitioners to ensure children's safety (Jones, 2003) we could speculate – particularly given other comments that Elsa makes throughout the data about the importance of ensuring children' safety - that she heard the music and laughter and went to check that the situation was not becoming out of hand. However, it is equally possible that Elsa was aware of being in the midst of filming using our head cameras, and she responded because she heard laughter and thought there may be an opportunity to film children engaging with humour. Monahon and Fisher (2010) argue that modifications in research participant behaviour due to an awareness of being 'watched' is known as the 'observer effect' and it is likely that Elsa could have been experiencing this. Both seem likely scenarios and it seems reasonable to surmise that elements from each were present in Elsa's decision to leave the sand tray to join the dancing children. In both instances, Elsa and Ana stop what they are doing and are taken along by the carnivalesque moment before them. This act communicates the chronotope of this KM as being filled with a sense of potential and uncertainty. It suggests that '[r]eality has other possibilities…' and reflects the idea that 'whatever we choose, we could have chosen something else and so could have become someone else' (Morson, 2010: 210-211). The next KM discussed, here, shares this chronotopic air; however, this example illustrates how children can move in and out of carnivalesque spaces with some speed.

5.5 KM 'Eggs, beans and sausages'

Elsa and Eloise are sitting together at a table. Elsa is pretending to be on
the phone to Eloise's nanna.

Elsa: Hello Eloise's Nanna (Eloise giggles). Hello. Yes, she's been a good girl (Eloise
giggles). Bit cheeky is our Eloise...

Eloise: Yeah.

Elsa: Isn't she? What is she doing? She is playing with the tea set.
She's making me eggs, beans and sausageeeeees. (Eloise laughs). Yum yum yum. Egg, beans
and suasages.

Eloise: Have you finished...can I have it back?

Elsa: I have...ooo...whose is it now?

Emily: It's my nanna (smiles).

Elsa: Is it your nanna? Oh you say hello to your nanna...well...oh...(Elsa mimes
being on the phone again). Hello Emily's nanna. (Emily laughs). Yeah.

Eloise: I've got eggs now. I've got eggs

Elsa: Emily's been a good girl too. (Emily is laughing and Elsa laughs too. The camera
pans around and shows Eloise smiling.). What is she doing? Well she's giggling actually.
She's giggling in my ear. (Emily continues to laugh). Yes. She's being cheeky too.
Bye bye. Ooooo, it's my nanna now. My nanny's on the phone. You talk to my nanna.

Emily: Hello, bye bye (laughs and Eloise laughs too).

Elsa: (laughs) you've not said hello to my nanny...

Eloise: (mimes taking the phone from Elsa) hello, bye bye (laughs and Elsa laughs).

Elsa: Can you tell her what I've been doing?

Emily: It's my, it's my ya ya (laughs).

Elsa: (smiling) It's what?

Emily: (laughing) It's my (Eloise laughs) ya ya. (all laugh).

Elsa: Who's ya ya? (all laugh). What does ya ya mean?

Emily: Ya ↑ya means...mummy.

Elsa: Ah, is that mummy in French? Mama?

Emily: That's my, that's my mummy.

Elsa: Oh. Go on then, say hello to your mummy.

Emily: You say hello to my mummy.

Elsa: Oh hello, it's a dog. Hello ...

Emily: No it's ↑NOT a dog, it's my mummy.

Elsa: Oh hello Emily's mummy. Yes, she's looking forward to going

to the hotel tonight. Yes.'

EMILY   ELOISE

ELSA

5.5.1 'Eggs, beans and sausages' - a practitioner perspective

Soundbite from Ana and Bulda DE1

Laura: Oh yeah. (all laugh). There is a bit more of that* *[*the children enjoying toilet humour at snack time*]...*

Bulda: Do you think that's them learning and trying to work out when it's acceptable to use toilet humour?

Ana: Yeah that's true...

Bulda: Because they are all repeating it and going 'she hasn't said 'no, don't say that right now', because obviously if they say it at the snack table we'll often go 'not using those sorts of words while we're having our dinner' you know...you know perhaps they're going 'oooo (...) Ana said it too... we can say bottom - WaHay'.

5.5.2 A Bakhtinian analysis of 'Eggs, beans and sausages'

BAKHTINIAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE OF EGGS, BEANS AND SAUSAGES					
Participants	**KM**	**Generic features/ Discourse**	**Emotional register of learning/truth**	**Time-space elaboration (chronotope/s)**	**Context**
Elsa, Eloise and Emily	'Eggs, Beans and Sausages'	clowning, anti-reality	humour joy connectedness with peers and authority figure jouissance (Barthes, 1975) displeasure personal power	Time as having potential and uncertainty	Free-play time. Interaction with peers and a practitioner moving between carnivalesque and 'real world' spaces

Fig 21

5.5.3 General Analysis

The occurrence of role-play where the children and practitioner inhabit a pretend 'second life outside officialdom' (Bakhtin, 1984a) and encapsulate a sense of 'anti-reality' (Bakhtin, 1984a) supports the KM's categorisation within the carnivalesque genre. Again, the experience appears to unite those who, outside of the carnival space, may be separated, this time by barriers of age and hierarchy, but within this carnivalesque space are 'considered equal' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 10). In everyday nursery life we may see a natural divide between the children and the practitioner as a result of the significant age difference and due to the hierarchy that exists between adults, in this context viewed as human 'beings,' and children, who are often viewed as 'human becomings' (Qvortrup, 2005). In addition, the experience seems to facilitate the formation of 'human relations' that are 'not only a fruit of imagination or abstract thought' (Bakhtin, 1984a: 10) but are 'experienced' (ibid.), placing the scenario within a chronotope that embodies potential, as 'pravda' or 'lived truth' (Sullivan, 2012) and in the sense that length of time and parameters of space appear indeterminate, yet almost tangibly real. This is supported by the actions of Eloise, Emily and Elsa whose polyphonic video footage seems to show them engaging in focused interactions. This can be seen via the

children's and practitioner's screens showing whomever is speaking at the time, with the head cameras remaining focused on the speaker until someone else takes over. Research supports the idea that the levels of focus seen in this carnivalesque interaction could signify significant and meaningful human, relational communication, as well as the children's desire to engage in attuned, concordant, intersubjective experiences with others; a phenomenon which it is argued develops from an early age (Stern, 1985; Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001).

The emotional register of KM Eggs, beans and sausages has a sense of Barthes' (1975) jouissance or sheer 'bliss', particularly when Emily joins in and is laughing as she is trying to say 'it's my ya ya'; an invented phrase which is nonsensical. Emily's anticipation of Elsa's response elicits an almost hysterically joyful response in her, akin to Barthes' concept which he suggests, in its most simplistic incarnation, is a form of joy on a higher plane. Barthes' Jouissance, however, is not a simple concept; rather, it is imbued with complexity and is an word missing that has been written about widely particularly by Barthes and Lacan (Stolzfus, 1989). The complexity of jouissance, at times, resonates with that of the carnivalesque and this theme will be discussed further in the final chapter as, arguably, it has implications for young children's carnivalesque humour in ECEC.

Although this KM only lasts for minutes, it appears that jouissance and displeasure both inhabit the space. They do so at separate times but, that they both appear in this short scenario illustrates the speed at which the mood apparently changes. The moment of change occurs when Elsa takes the play in a different direction by suggesting that there is a dog on the other end of the phone. Emily reacts to this quite strongly, highlighting her displeasure at this turn of events, and exclaiming '[n]o it's ↑NOT a dog, it's my mummy,' seemingly wishing to leave Elsa in no doubt that this turn of events was unwelcome. In this moment, Emily steps out of the play frame (Garvey, 1977) to correct Elsa and there is a sudden change of emotional register. Far from this event souring the mood and pushing KM 2 away from the carnivalesque genre, this sudden change strengthens the notion of the KM's carnivalesque nature. The concepts of change and the unexpected can both be described as being carnivalesque traits (Bakhtin, 1984a) and, although there is sudden jump from being inside the play frame to being outside, Elsa takes the issue in hand and immediately attempts to rescue the situation.

Another identifiable carnivalesque trait present within this KM is the idea that the children and Elsa are acting out a scenario which seems familiar to all present and almost re-modelling it and playing with it as the children explore one another's developing personalities. At the same time they are almost testing what they believe Elsa's personality to be, almost in an act of transactional analysis (Solomon, 2003) and whether or not it can be flexible within a play scenario. Elsa tells the person on the phone that Eloise is being 'good' and that she is also 'cheeky,' suggesting that it is possible to be both and the two are not mutually exclusive. In this act, Elsa seems to be confirming that she is happy to blur any existing hierarchical boundaries and relinquish any sense of authority, momentarily, to exaggerate her practitioner role for the purposes of the play and engage with the children as an equal: the blurring of hierarchies, equality and exaggeration all being strong carnivalesque themes (Bakhtin, 1984a).

Outside of the carnivalesque space, when the barriers between adults and children are restored, it can be argued that the children only have access to imagined equality between themselves and practitioners. Entering into a space characterised by a carnival spirit enables them to engage in a lived experience of truth or 'pravda' of 'free and familiar contacts' (Bakhtin, 1984a) between themselves and the practitioner. Here 'pravda' is explained by Bakhtin as 'individual truth' that is 'artistic and irresponsible' as opposed to truth as 'istina' which is said to represent universality (Bakhtin, 1993).

(This clip follows on from eggs beans and sausages).

As the video starts we hear Eloise's very high-pitched laugh,
almost like a squeal.

Elsa: oh, what you doing? Eloise always jumps up onto
my lap...how did you get up there? (Eloise is laughing).
(Slightly laughing) Get down. NO. (Eloise's laughter increases in
volume and goes up in pitch). No, get down...no thank you (laughter stops)
because you are going to
get yourselves hurt and you're gonna fall, so you need
to get down. Cheeky.

ELSA   ELOISE

5.6.1 A dialogic map of 'How did she get up there?'

BAKHTINIAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE OF HOW DID SHE GET UP THERE?					
Participants	**KM**	**Genres and Discourse**	**Emotional register of learning/truth**	**Time-space elaboration (chronotope)**	**Context**
Elsa, Eloise	How did she get up there?	Carnivalesque	Humour/the comic, joy, opposes social hierarchy, rebellion/resistance?	Seizing the moment/ borrowed time?	Spontaneous – children and Elsa playing - mood is positive and Eloise seems to takes things a step further

Fig 22

The following KM is lengthy, so is presented below with analysis woven through it to preserve its momentum whilst highlighting elements that are significant from a Bakhtinian and theoretical perspective placing emphasis on the chronotope of the KM. My analysis is in grey, distinguish it from the data.

5.6.3 KM from Ana and Bulda DE1a

Laura plays the 'what is she doing?' clip…

Bulda: Hmmmmm…it's a little bit…false and a little bit…put on, the laughter…

Ana: The laughter.

Bulda: Yeah.

Ana: Quite manic, I thought…

Bulda: Yeah, it doesn't sound like a genuine hoo haa ha, 'that's funny' laughter, it's like (with raised eyebrows, eyes down and a grin) huh huh huh huh kind of 'look what I've done'.

Ana: Yeah.

This exchange between Ana and Bulda over the nature of the laughter in KM How did she get up there, reflects their opinion that not all forms of laughter indicate humour: an idea that appears throughout the body of literature on humour and laughter (Chapman and Foot, 1980). Laughter can occur for a number of different reasons, only one of which denotes enjoyment of humour. Others include, as a response to anxiety, shock and uncertainty (ibid). Arguably it is significant that the PRs, here, indicate that this is their understanding as current theory argues that it can be detrimental to children if practitioners misconstrue the cause of their laughter because some laughter can be perceived as negative (ibid). This discussion of laughter appears to sit within a carnivalesque chronotope, with its associated raised eyebrows, sly grins and suggestion of children's subversive laughter. Arguably, this illustrates that Ana and Bulda are able to recognise and, seemingly appreciate, this carnivalesque behaviour. Their words and actions suggest they are classifying this laughter as somewhat negative, potentially manipulative and circumspect. This is contrary to the idea that Eloise's laughter, here, is ambivalent carnivalesque laughter. This view of children's

Ana: Yeah, like '(quickly) I'm getting away with it, I'm getting away with it ha ha ha ha ha ha' manic kind of thing. You know?

Ana: Nervous laughter.

Ana: Yeah. And that kind of happens…oh…as Elsa is starting to change from…you know…'^oh, what are you doing?', whereas, suddenly her tone changes when she seems to think 'actually no' (laughs).

Bulda and Ana: Yeah (smile).

(Pause)

Ana: Someone could get hurt here?

Bulda: Yeah, yeah.

Ana: And the laugh kind of…escalates in this sort of ^ hhuhuhuhuhuhuuhuhuhuhuhuh…(…)

Bulda: Yep, yep.

Laura: So how does that kind of thing make you feel? As…as…in your role, as a practitioner? What's…you know…do you have a kind of a response to that?

Bulda:…I guess it's just how you react to that 'am I gonna be told off?' feeling (moves head down and looks up) isn't it?

Ana: And maybe you could (…)

Bulda: Yeah.

Ana: …ought to be something that is worthy of…you like say whether you find it fun, too, or not or whether it is a question of actually 'no that's not funny' and then you can learn that that's not funny…

Laura: Ok.

Bulda: And like Elsa said…she explained to them why she was saying 'you can't do this (…) you might fall. WE know how we are going to react to that and be calm about it…but what's to say the child doesn't know that you're not going to go 'OH NO GET DOWN' RAA RAA. And be really firm with them…in other situations maybe parents wouldn't act calmly to them if they'd done climbing on the sofas or whatever, at home. So, they are manic…laughing, manically, because they are not quite sure how the adult will react.

Ana: So that's why you've put here 'testing boundaries'…? (see Fig 15)

Key Moment	Humour Type/s	Characteristics of Humour Types
	Silly nonsense!	made-up words
Eggs, Beans and Sausages and It's My Ya Ya Window 1 - Eloise Window 2 - Sandra		
	Energetic	laughing at each other
Good Moves Window 1 Elsa Window 2 Ana (start at 03.54:25)		
	Cheeky!	testing boundaries - 'is this funny' - learning
It's Working Again and How Did She Get Up There? Window 1 - Sebastian Window 2 - Eloise Window 3 - Elsa		

Fig 23

Ana: Yeah. They are learning about it…

Bulda: Yeah. And 'how are you gonna react if I do this?'

Laura: Yeah. And do you think that partly the reason it might be FUNNY is because 'I don't know if I should be doing this, whoah, hang on (laughs) this is a bit (sharp intake of breath)'?

Bulda: Yeah.

In this section Ana and Bulda discuss the carnivalesque subversion that can be seen in 'KM How did she get up there?' and frame it as 'testing boundaries', a theme which reflects a chronotope of hesitation and anticipation and fits well into the carnivalesque genre where challenging authority and subversion are rife (Bakhtin, 1984b). They are also illustrating an understanding of the different aspects of children's lives that can influence their behaviour. This is particularly evident when, referring to the potential differences in early childhood practitioners' and parents' responses to children' behaviour, Bulda says,

'WE [practitioners] know how we are going to react to that and be calm about it…but what's to say the child doesn't know that you're not going to go 'OH NO GET DOWN' RAA RAA, and be really firm with them…in other situations maybe parents wouldn't act calmly to them if they'd done climbing on the sofas or whatever, at home'

(Bulda)

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Bulda's comments suggest that any subversion or challenge to authority that children engage in may not be in response to the ferocity with which they are reprimanded at nursery for undesirable behaviour. Bulda appears confident in her assertion that, as practitioners, they know that they will consistently respond calmly to the children. She suggests that children may not necessarily understand that, however, because they may have experienced different responses to particular behaviours from parents and, therefore, anticipate a similar response from the adults at nursery. This gives the scent of a dualistic chronotope that might flit from a sense of time and space as uncertain and potentially troublesome; to a safer, calmer, slower chronotope. The PRs comments suggest that Eloise may be in a state of flux between these two chronopic states. It would be interesting to look into this further to explore children's perspectives on their anticipated responses of practitioners and parents to particular modes of behaviour. If a significant number of children were under the impression that practitioners may react sternly in some situations, this may encourage their engagement with subversive, carnivalesque humour. If the opposite were the case, however, the children's engagement with the carnivalesque may not be linked to their desire to challenge adult responses to behaviours the children deem inappropriate or unacceptable. Instead, it may result from a broader sense of social rules that permeate through the variety of experiences that children have that filter through to them from the wider, macro aspects of our social lives to the more intimate micro influences (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

In the section, below, Ana and Bulda talk about the close emotional proximity that laughter and crying have with one another.

Ana: It's a bit like when an adult…actually it's because you want to cry. Do you know what I mean? Like the nervous kind of '^heh heh it's really funny, heh heh, oh yeah maybe it's not' (laughs).
Ana: That's really interesting as well, because it might not be funny…
Bulda: No, it's like when you have an automatic reaction…yeah, yeah, when you think people are laughing at you and those kinds of things it's not necessarily how it is meant to be interpreted.
Ana: Yeah. So in that instance where it becomes a bit manic…maybe it's not humour.
Ana and Bulda: No.
L Maybe it's laughter as a response to…feeling slightly uncertain and a bit…

Ana: Yeah…it's a bit like when you…if you have to tell a child 'no' or tell them off as it were and they smile at you. That's not necessarily them finding it funny, that is their 'ah, I've done something wrong and I don't know what to do now, ha ha, kinda…it is that…they think…do you know what I mean? They don't understand it, necessarily…again, it's not a humour thing. They are not finding it funny. They are not finding it funny. They are obviously nervous because they know they have done something that they shouldn't have.

Ana's reference to the idea of laughing and crying being so close to one another, that it is possible to laugh when you are upset and/or shocked and almost simultaneously feel like crying, is interesting. The current research stipulates that there are different reasons for laughter and, as mentioned earlier, only one of them links to humour (Chapman and Foot, 1980). This point is furthered by Giles et al (1970) who argue that laughter stimuli are not necessarily discrete and that humorous laughter may be accompanied by some of the criteria identified above but most particularly, by social factors. This is supported by McGhee's (1979) suggestion, highlighted in Chapter 2, that humour researchers, '…can only make an educated guess regarding humour perceptions on the basis of behavioural cues' (McGhee, 1979: 68). This point resonates with the messy ambivalence of carnivalesque laughter that seems to embody the notion of children's laughter as a complex response to a range of stimuli, and not one that should be assumed is a humorous reaction. This is compounded by looking at this through a carnivalesque lens. I argue that all forms of laughter could be framed as carnivalesque humour, given the complexity of this genre and chronotope, coupled with its ambivalent yet, at the same time, nuanced nature. Further, as our understanding and perception of laughter has changed over time it has moved from a phenomenon that was wholly positive – at least within folk culture, if not in the domain of the higher classes - in the Middle Ages and in Rabelaisian Renaissance, to something which is often seen in a negative light today. Consequently, if we move our contemporary perspective of laughter aside, it might be profitable to recognise it as wholly positive, particularly when relating to children in the nursery setting and framing their humour and laughter within that context as 'carnivality'. Moreover, it is worth pursuing the idea that laughter can be both related and unrelated to humour at the same time because this would be essentially carnivalesque in spirit (Bakhtin, 1984a). On the theme of the relationship between laughter and humour, Smuts argues that '[w]e laugh for a variety of reasons—hearing a funny joke, inhaling laughing gas, being tickled—not all of which result from what we think of as humor' (my emphasis) (Smuts, 2010: np). What we understand humour to be, arguably has bearing on our view of whether

or not something is funny. Further, it also seems to link to our perception of the relationship between laughter and humour. This theme is borne out in the last element of the KM, when the conversation turns to making links between what may be perceived as non-humorous laughter and children's attention seeking behaviour.

Laura: So, do you think it's quite important to recognise the difference [then] and do you feel that you can [read different types of laughter]?
Ana: Yeah. Mmmm. I think that you don't always think about it all the time because that's only because we've spoken about it now that I've suddenly remembered…from training and when you talk about things…a bit like when you think children are being naughty, you think 'oh it's(…)' but, actually, that they want that negative attention and they want any kind of attention when they're…and when you're in those situations and a child is being mischievous and they are laughing at you and you're thinking 'really this is not funny' and you say 'this is not funny' and I do it a lot…and you say that but actually maybe you need to actually maybe think they are not finding it…
Bulda: Actually, they are not laughing they are just struggling to deal with it.
Ana: Yeah.

The idea of children laughing when adults do not approve of their behaviour seems to be one that both Ana and Bulda can relate to, in this example. That they surmise children might be laughing because they are potentially seeking 'negative attention', fits with Ana's view that what they are laughing at 'is not funny': it suggests that if something is perceived by an adult as not funny, any laughter associated with it will be perceived as negative by them. This poses the question: how can a person be sure that another person is or is not finding something funny? Perhaps the laughing child who is exhibiting challenging behaviour is finding the situation simultaneously funny and unfunny in true, ambivalent carnivalesque style (Bakhtin, 1984a).

5.7 KM - Eeny meeny miny mo (that's not funny)

Emily: And afterwards…so, you argued and I said say eeny meeny miny mo, catch a pira pira po, eeny miny eeny mo, catch a pira pira po.

Marcus: (laughing) I just …. On my tummy

Emily: No, you laughed…that's not funny. NO.

Sebastian: If you laugh, you think it's funny, if you don't laugh, you don't think it's funny.

Marcus: I didn't…I just laughed a bit and I did…it's not funny.

Sebastian: MIRIAM did….

Megan: What? SO? No…I didn't…

Sebastian: YOU DID. Me now. Eeny meeny miny mo…eeeny meeny mini mo, catch a pira pora po, eeney meeny miny mo. Me (laughs).

5.8 KM - Eeny meeny miny mo…a chair

Eeny meeny miny mo…a chair

Megan: NO…eeny meeny mini mo, catch a pirate on the toe, eeny meeny mini mo……a chaaair (laughs).

Emily: NO not a chair…on MEEeee.

THE CHILDREN…

(represented by their head-camera-stickers)

MEGAN   SEBASTIAN   EMILY   MARCUS

Whilst exploring footage from the children's head cameras it was exciting to discover that they had engaged in conversation, away from adults, about the connection between laughter and thinking something is funny. This means that the children's voices form part of our enquiry of 'what is funny', without adult influence having been used to acquire their views, somehow framing their contribution as more authentic because the topic is one they expressed interest in without coercion (Albon and Rosen, 2015).

BAKHTINIAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY TABLE OF ''Eeny meeny miny mo…that's not funny' and 'Eeny meeny miny mo…a chair'					
Participants	**KM**	**Genres and Discourse**	**Emotional register of learning/truth**	**Time-space elaboration (chronotope)**	**Context**
Megan, Sebastian, Emily and Marcus	Eeny meeny miny mo…that's not funny' and 'Eeny meeny miny mo…a chair'	clowning, anti-reality and reality resistance, subversion, internally persuasive discourse	humour joy connectedness and disconnectedness with peers displeasure personal power	Time as having potential and uncertainty AND Time as paused	Sitting around a table with peers, playing with home-made playdough.

Fig 24

5.8.2 General Analysis

Their discussion of what is funny and how we know if a person finds something funny begins with Emily's comment 'No, you laughed…that's not funny…NO'. Her statement suggests that she perceives laughing as a response to finding something funny. Her comment ends with the strong suggestion that Marcus should not be laughing as he should not find 'it' funny. It is difficult to determine what Emily means by 'it' because she seems to not to notice that Marcus was laughing at the squashed playdough on his t-shirt, but we cannot be sure of this. That Emily considers Marcus to be laughing 'at' her, is also supported by a perception that she was the last one to speak and attention being away from Marcus until she heard him laugh. These factors combined could have cause her to think he was laughing at her. In addition, Emily's eagerness to tell Marcus 'that's not funny. NO', compounds this idea, as we are likely to have a stronger emotional reaction to the thought of being laughed at, than to

disagreeing an experience is funny (Loizou, 2005). From that moment, it appears the object of the laughter may be misconceived. However, Sebastian seems clear that laughter equals finding something funny and no laughter equals not finding something funny. In response to Sebastian, Marcus' comment seems intensely dialogic (Bakhtin, 1984b) and to be in response to another, invisible, voice. Below, this voice is brought to life, not to make any claims about the content of the invisible other's utterances; instead, it is offered to illustrate the suggestion that Marcus' comment contains spaces or pauses where evidence of 'sore-spots'(Bakhtin, DI) appear that could indicate the presence of an invisible voice that Marcus is responding to strongly, albeit unwittingly. As Sullivan argues, created dialogues can 'show…how anticipated voices and viewpoints of different people enter into direct dialogue with each other' (Sullivan, 2012: 108). In attempting to understand the analytical purpose of created dialogues with an invisible other, first it is helpful to consider Bakhtin's concept of hidden dialogue. He asks us to '[i]magine a dialogue of two persons in which the statements of the second speaker are omitted, but in such a way that the general sense is not at all violated. The second speaker is present, invisibly, his words are not there, but deep traces left by these words have a determining influence on all the present and visible words of the first speaker' (PDP:197). The created dialogue, below, illustrates the 'deep traces' of an invisible other's words:

5.7.2 CREATED DIALOGUE WITH INVISIBLE OTHER

Sebastian: If you laugh, you think it's funny, if you don't laugh, you don't think it's funny.

Invisible other: (to Marcus) You laughed at Emily.

Marcus: I didn't…

Invisible other: But you were laughing?

Marcus: I just laughed a bit and I did…

Invisible other: You found what Emily said funny?

Marcus: … it's not funny.

Invisible other: So, you were laughing at something else, then?

It could be argued that the next example of an invisible other's presence, arises from one of Megan's comments. Megan and Marcus both seem to be focused, primarily, on Marcus and

the playdough on his t-shirt. Neither seem to be aware of what Emily is saying and doing. It could be that both Megan and Marcus experience confusion as a result of this, and, from a Bakhtinian perspective, that this is reflected within the hidden dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1984b) of Marcus' comments as he struggles to understand the context of Emily and Sebastian's observations. This could be said of Megan, too, and the invisible other's presence in her comments, when brought together with Marcus' created dialogue, may have looked like this:

5.7.3 CREATED DIALOGUE WITH INVISIBLE OTHER

Sebastian: If you laugh, you think it's funny, if you don't laugh, you don't think it's funny.

Invisible other: (to Marcus) You laughed at Emily.

Marcus: I didn't…

Invisible other: But you were laughing?

Marcus: I just laughed a bit and I did…

Invisible other: You found what Emily said funny?

Marcus: … it's not funny.

Invisible other: (to Marcus) So, you were laughing at something else, then?

Sebastian: (to Emily) MEGAN did….

Megan: What?

Invisible other: You laughed at Marcus and the play dough squashed on his t-shirt, didn't you?

Megan: SO?

Invisible other: So, I think Sebastian has the impression you laughed at Emily.

Megan: No…I didn't.

The hidden voices displayed in these created dialogues cannot offer us a clear indication of the content of the hidden voices comments. However, arguably what they can offer is a sense of how Bakhtin's notion of hidden dialogue and the idea that other voices live even our apparent 'monologues'. In addition, they serve to highlight potential confusion over what the children really think is or is not funny and why. Having a clear understanding of what is or is not funny and the underpinning reasons, however, could be argued as being somewhat illusive and this is supported by comments from the PRs, presented as soundbites in the

created conversation, below, that illustrates their awareness of and views about the differences in appreciation of humour.

5.7.4 CREATED DIALOGUE: A Sense of Humour

(Taken from Ana and Bulda's BDE and Elsa and Gerda's BDE)

Ana: Because one person's sense of humour is different to another person's...

Gerda: My son doesn't like [Sarah Millican] ...he does a brilliant impression of her, which is hilarious, (all laugh) but just doesn't...and I do...and sometimes I don't know if it's an age thing? Because I remember my Mum not liking certain comedy shows...but I always think it was an age thing…But she didn't like the young ones...it was almost like...and I think now I'm at the age where there's some things that my children laugh at that I don't particularly find funny...

Ana: Yeah, the age thing…I do…I mean, I did like the silly, like toilet humour jokes and those kind of things, and I like things like The Inbetweeners and stuff because it's just...it is a bit silly and they do, do sort of...

Gerda:…I like Only Fools and Horses and those sorts of things - I liked all the Ronnie Barker things, 'Porridge, Open All Hours...there's not a lot I don't...well for some reason I don't like Mrs Brown's Boys - I just can't see it...there's something in that I just don't get.

Bulda: Yeah, I understand that. I can't stand these movies these days that...overdo slapstick humour...I just...It's just ridiculous and silly and I just don't find it funny at all…I can cope with some of it but then it's like no, that's just daft now.

Elsa: Yeah, I don't like anything too...oooh...too dry or risqué - I don't like a lot of blue jokes because I feel embarrassed, I think...especially if I don't know the person...like if it was…people tell jokes and I feel very...I don't know what it is but I don't like it. I don't know them. Now...I mean my partner could tell me a really rude joke and I'd laugh and think it was really funny but if I don't know...

This created dialogue gives a flavour of the participants' thoughts and feelings about humour. It begins with Ana's suggestion that there is no such thing as a ubiquitous sense of humour: individuals' appreciation of humour differ. This is a significant comment because if there is

acknowledgment that individuals can appreciate humour differently, it is likely there will be acknowledgement that children and adults can appreciate humour differently, as well. Gerda supports this assumption and takes the notion of difference further, specifically raising the subject of potential generational differences in humour appreciation. Gerda and Ana are of different generations and Ana appears slightly hesitant and almost apologetic of the fact she enjoys 'silly' humour. It could be argued that as silliness and seriousness appear polarised in many areas of British culture, and, further, if silliness is associated with humour, the suggestion that an adult may enjoy silly humour could label them as the antithesis of seriousness. With the value that is arguably placed on seriousness within our society, 'outing' yourself as a silliness sympathiser places you in a potentially precarious position where it is as if you are admitting that you do not need to be taken 'seriously'. This can help to explain Ana's slight hesitance and lowering of voice at times when discussing the things she finds funny as it could be argued to be not be taken seriously is something many adults try to avoid. A desire for adults to steer clear of the messy label of 'silly' suggests that there may be forms of humour which are perceived as more acceptable i.e. less silly, and therefore more in keeping with an English fondness of sensibility that keeps humour contained within manageable and controllable boundaries. Gerda's insinuation that she does not enjoy the humour presented in the television programme, Mrs Brown's Boys, points to this, as in many ways the programme epitomises silliness: the central character parodying the role of an Irish mother with a large family who have a penchant for slapstick behaviour. Bulda enters the conversation with a comment, echoing Gerda's sentiments, in relation to what she sees as 'ridiculous', 'silly' films that 'overdo slapstick humour'. She suggests that this form of humour can only be tolerated so much until it completely breaks the boundaries of rationality, at which point she (and potentially, Gerda and others who share her appreciation of humour) cease to understand the appeal. Finally, Elsa's comment builds on the idea that all the practitioners, except Ana, seem clear about the forms of comedy they do not find funny, but takes the dialogue in a slightly different direction by introducing the potential for certain types of humour to go beyond evoking indifference or dislike, and to cause embarrassment and discomfort.

Evidence within the data suggests that embarrassment and discomfort are not the only potentially negative responses to certain aspects of humour. Another potentially negative response from the PRs in the data was directed towards the potential for children's laughter to become out of control. We can see this theme, clearly in two the KMs, below.

5.8 KM from Elsa and Gerda BDE: Calm down!

Elsa: They laugh when they are surprised by something... or...I'm just trying to think...

Laura: It can be a bit tricky trying to think back...I mean there doesn't have to be anything, I'm not waiting for you to come up with something else (all laugh)...it might just be those things...

Elsa: No, it is that kind of thing isn't it? Silly rhymes, nonsense-y things they like...they do silly things, don't they? Like they'll put dressing up things on and put them on differently...

Gerda: Sometimes it's intentional and sometimes it's not is it? Sometimes they do things because they seem to know it's going to be funny...but other times they just do it and....I mean even playing racing chasing games in the garden and they want you to chase them and they think it's hilarious don't they?

Laura: What? You chasing them?

Gerda: Yeah, you know you're chasing them and then you're either side of the tree (moves from side to side as if looking around a tree) and they find it hysterical. (All laugh).

Elsa: Yeah you know, calm down.

Laura: (laughs) you just said calm down, does it get like that then?

Elsa: Oh yeah, sometimes they are really....and you think, 'that's enough now or you are going to hurt yourself' or...

Gerda: They might start something gently and its funny but then they just take it a bit too far...I can't think of any sort of...

Elsa: No, I can't...they'll get...like moving around and doing something...like spinning and things like that...

5.9 KM from Ana and Bulda BDE: We're going to have to calm this down

A: ↑THEY sometimes start laughing though... at almost nothing.

B: Yeah.

A: And they just can't stop laughing...they are all laugh...or they laugh at things like...like, I don't know...like one of the little boys makes up songs and he's just singing, and they are saying silly words and they are laughing and...

L: It was like the other day...

A: (laughing loudly) YEAH, yeah.

B: It's like that Christmas song we're learning at the moment, with the running...

A: Yeah.

B: And they all just think this bit of music is really funny and they are just in hysterics half way through.

L: So, what's that about? What's the bit of music?

A: Well it's about the shepherds.

B: It's about the shepherds.

A: And they run off to see the angel and it is quite upbeat, and we sort of went like that...

B: Like running...

A: Yeah, and they started going like that...

B: And they started doing it and every time they do it they are all just giggling, because they just think it's really funny, and we're thinking 'we've got to do this as a play'

A: (laughs) to our parents. Yeah. Please stop having fun (laughs).

B We're going to have to calm this down. 'NO MORE FUN. NO LAUGHING'...oh dear (all laugh).

The idea that humour and laughter can become 'too much' links to the view that there are contexts in which particular humour is appropriate and contexts in which it is not. Ana and Bulda explore this idea in the KM, below.

5.10 KM from Ana and Bulda BDE: A time and a place for humour?

 (relates to the KM of the same name under the first question about what adults find funny – need to make links…)

B: But they do that with laughing too...they'll say something they'll think is really funny and you're just like 'well, that's not funny (laughs) what are you laughing at?'...

L: So why do you think they do that? I don't have an answer...

A: I think it's that process of learning the...learning...not necessarily about humour but the language and the words and the…and what effect they have on people.

B: Yeah, yeah,

A: Whether it...'Cause it's a bit like us as an adult...like you say, you learn about other people's sense of humour so you learn what you think would make them laugh, so it's...that...sort of...

B: It's also social etiquette...what is acceptable when? because obviously sometimes they'll start with dirty words at the dinner table and we're quite firm then with the...

A: Yeah.

B: 'That's not acceptable' but if they are doing it within play then well then does it really matter if you said bum?

A: If you're changing a baby's nappy, or a nappy...yeah

B: Yeah.

L: So it's context dependent?

A: Yeah.

Beginning with the suggestion that children can laugh at things that adults cannot relate to, and therefore do not find funny, this KM ends with Bulda commenting that she perceived there to be appropriate and inappropriate contexts for humour, particularly scatological humour. She suggests that she would not welcome this form of humour at the 'dinner table' but that she would find it acceptable if it occurred during play and Ana agreed that the appropriateness of humour is context dependent. Children's carnivalesque behaviours that embody a sense of resistance and rebellion, for example engaging in toilet humour whilst at the 'dinner table', could be argued as a response to the cultural elaboration of the importance and significance placed on politeness and manners by adults (Tallant, 2015) as well as to a sense of rationality that Duncam (2009) suggests can be found in school environments. The soundbites below continue the idea of the appropriateness and inappropriateness of types of humour and contexts for humour, highlighting that the PRs recognise the potential tensions that can arise for adults and children as a result of differences in sense of humour and a need to consider other people's feelings and be sensitive to the idea that they might feel embarrassed or hurt by something that another person finds funny.

5.11 Soundbites of humour and the comfort/discomfort and appropriate/inappropriate divide

The soundbites in the table, below, highlight the variety and range of views held by the PRs relating to humour, generally, including: that what 'funny' means is not necessarily universal; appreciating or not certain kinds of humour; the different ways that humour can make a person feel; concern for other people's perception of you on discovering that you find certain things humorous are just some of the themes running through the table.

Soundbites of humour and the comfort/discomfort and appropriate/inappropriate divide			
Ana	Bulda	Elsa	Gerda
One of my friends, she's got a really dirty mind so everything is very, when it's humour it's very innuendo-y - whereas other things, it's more like child-like humour...you find silly little things funny like fluffy unicorns and stuff like that, you know...just…	Yeah, it doesn't sound like a genuine hoo haa ha, 'that's funny' laughter, it's like (with raised eyebrows, eyes down and a grin) huh huh huh huh kind of like 'look what I've done'.	I mean I don't think people think of it quite as much...but it is that...isn't it...you don't kind of think of things to make people uncomfortable but sometimes it is funny (laughs quietly).	I mean looking back the Young Ones was not really...you know...it was quite political, but not as near the mark as a lot of comedy NOW.
Because, you know, you could hurt somebody's feelings and you just have to say to them 'look, you might find this funny, but they might not'	Obviously if they say it at the snack table we'll often go 'not using those sorts of words while we're having our dinner' you know...you know perhaps they're going 'oooo (...) Ana said it too... we can say bottom - wahay'	Well, they were embarrassing...that sort of thing...so...	Or if you laugh they may think badly of you, so...
Yeah...and you kind of have to see what the situation is to then be able to assess whether...like I say, it's not necessarily whether you find it funny or not, it's whether it IS funny or not...	When it's acceptable to laugh at somebody, when it's acceptable to use those words...	But that's me...I feel... it makes me feel a bit anxious and a bit...I don't know, I just don't like it. (...)	He found it funny that you were uncomfortable...
Because they like words like bottom and butt and bum don't they (A and B laugh) because it's that (...).	Yeah. At least you have put in those foundations for what should be followed.	I feel silly now.	It's like if, you know, if they drop something, or...and it's funny for whatever reason, and then they might start throwing...because they are trying to get that reaction again...

Fig 25

I argue that they also reflect a theme that runs through the analysis chapter that paints a picture of humour as complex, messy, ambivalent, at times troubling, challenging; yet also fun, foolish, empowering, grotesque and necessary that is, for much of the time, an aspect of children's lives that is welcomed by the PRs. However, this complexity may be a large part of the explanation for humour not being recognized in an official, early years curricula

capacity in this country (Tallant, 2015). The ambivalent nature of children's carnivalesque humour and as it appears within the utterances presented and analysed in this chapter, underpin the arguments I put forward in the next and final part. This chapter tells the story of children's carnivality and offers reasons why and how I believe the findings of this study could be of significant benefit to young children and the ECEC field.

Chapter 6

Discussion and (Non)Final(isable)Thoughts

6.1 Young children, humour and ECEC settings: towards children's humour as carnivality

The data from this study illustrate multiple examples of young children's humour that present as Bakhtinian carnivalesque. From embracing clowning and foolery, grotesque realism and experiencing a sense of free and familiar interaction; to engaging in carnival performances, playing with social hierarchy, and to resisting adults' attempts to finalise them and claim, albeit implicitly, that they, and we all, can be 'known'. The picture of children inhabiting a carnival space within a nursery setting has been painted throughout the thesis and directs us to the value of viewing ECEC settings as housing children's own Carnivalesque space: a space in which they display and revel in, to coin a term, 'carnivality'. This chapter tells the story of children's carnivality (and uses that term throughout to describe the children's engagement with carnivalesque humour) as seen within the findings in the data and puts forward a case for reframing children's humour in order to facilitate a new wave of early childhood practice that seeks to listen to children using a fresh approach. Firstly, the primary features in the data that enable us to think of children's humour as carnivalesque are discussed. Following this, the PRs become the focus, when the findings that offer a practitioner perspective are discussed alongside potential barriers to ECEC embracing children's carnivalesque humour. This involves the consideration of a potential struggle raised within the data, sparked by early years professionals' and children's fundamental differences, and accentuated by children's capacity for 'jouissance'. The chapter moves on to consider aspects of the data that I argue prompt an exploration of the potential rift between social constructions of young children as innocent and naturally developing, held in ECEC in England and that appear in the findings, and the idea raised in the analysis that children have an affinity with 'carnivalesque jouissance'. Building upon this, a call to arms is issued where I argue that early childhood practitioners need to become conversant in the language of young children's carnivalesque humour, particularly if children are to benefit from a meaningful relational connection with adults in ECEC. Lastly, I argue that young children and ECEC practitioners could benefit from a change in the EYFS: a move towards a focus that considers the development of children's humour *and*, importantly, that embraces a more

holistic discourse of valuing humour as an inevitable and necessary part of children's experiences within ECEC settings.

6.2 Reframing children's humour in ECEC as 'Carnivality'

The findings of this study offer a wide range of examples of children's humour clearly presenting as Bakhitnian carnivalesque. Here, the detail of how this appears within the analysis is offered, alongside a review of how these findings sit with the current literature and research on children's humour. This discussion addresses the first of this study's research questions: RQ1. What are young children's manifestations and perceptions of and reactions to humour within an early years' setting, from a child, practitioner and Bakhtinian perspective? In the spirit of unfinalisability, I begin a dialogue inviting post-thesis responses from the PRs and children in the study and the ECEC field as a whole and make the case for reframing young children's humour in ECEC settings as carnivalesque.

6.2.1 Children as carnival performers and clowns

A theme within the children's humour depicted in the analysis chapter is their engagement in playful carnivalesque performances that fit with Bakhtin's description of them as not differentiating between audience and performers: instead, involving everyone in the carnivalesque space and embodying a sense of revitalisation, rebirth, renewal and possibility (RHW). The children find themselves in carnival situations, where old experiences can become new experiences and be played with all over again. We can see this in the mimicry of Oliver's fall, engaged in by children in KM I fell on my bottom: mimicry looming large in Bakhtin's carnival imagery (White, 2013) and strengthening the carnivalesque essence of this event. Another clowning behaviour seen in the data is children's engagement with 'loose nonsense' (Kennedy, 1991) or, playing and fluctuating with the laws of nature in a chaotic way. This playful behaviour embodies the sense of 'anything goes' that Bakhtin stressed was an integral feature within a carnival sense of the world (RHW). Further, this finding fits well with the re-envisioning of children's humour as 'a different kind of play' (see Loizou, 2005, Chapter 2) and, when combined, are ideas that create a strong case for framing these aspects of children's behaviour as playful carnivalesque performances. Akin to the image of playful performances is the carnivalesque clowning and foolery that the data show children engaging with. If we view '[c]lowning [as being] about the freedom that comes from a state of total, unconditional acceptance of our most authentic selves' (Henderson in Davison, 2016), or as

'[a] quest for liberation from the "social masks" we all wear' (Murray, 2003: 79, on Jacques Lecoq), and as Bakhtin's and Rabelais' representatives of a carnivalesque spirit and atmosphere (RHW), we cannot and should not ignore the preponderance of these images in the data. Further, it is important to recognise and value the significance of children's engagement with clowning and appreciate the empowered position it affords when acting and/or re-enacting moments that resonate for them, and that personify the spirit of carnivalesque clowning (RHW). This convincing presence of 'child clowns' in the data reinforces the argument for viewing children's humour, in this ECEC context, as 'carnivality'.

6.2.2 The pull of feasting and an egalitarian carnival space

The free and familiar contact between people during carnival (RHW), as seen through the children's carnival 'misalliances' in the data, is also a significant theme running through the findings. It appears that the enticing, liberating, rousing atmosphere created by the children's engagement with a carnivalesque sense of the world, succeeds in bringing together children who would not usually mix outside of a carnivalesque space. Further, due to the removal of hierarchical boundaries within carnival spaces, the data shows children and adults coming together in a mood of celebration and equality. This is significant as it provides the children with an opportunity to explore their place in the social hierarchy and experience a sense of equality in carnival that can only be imagined in 'real life'. Whilst inhabiting this egalitarian carnival space (RHW) children can subvert the rules they are bound to in the outside world and challenge pervasive cultural norms by, in the words of the PRs, 'testing boundaries'. In this scenario, as suggested in the analysis, it is almost like the children engage in a form of transactional analysis (Solomon, 2003 - see Chapter 5:138) in their communication with adults and each other, to aid their exploration of PR Elsa's temperament (Lensmire, 2011). Also linked to their desire to 'analyse' the social conditions surrounding them, test boundaries and subvert rules, is the children's inclination to engage with carnivality during mealtimes. In line with Oksnes (2008), Odergaard (2013) and White (2013), the children seem drawn towards carnivality when in groups, eating around a table. For Bakhtin this reflects the significance of feasts and feasting in medieval carnivals (RHW). In this space, characterised by the right to emerge from the routine of life, and the right to be free from all that is official and consecrated, the children are able to experience the right to inhabit a space

where there is no risk of them being conceptualised as human becomings (Qvortrup, 2009); instead they can rejoice in being who they are in that moment. This point is significant if we consider the pressures that inhabit ECEC settings, driven by the need for practitioners to document children's 'progress' to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Nutbrown, (2012) argues it is likely that children in English ECEC, today, can sense the pressure practitioners are under to meet targets, however hazily. It seems reasonable, therefore, that children might seek opportunities to escape the pressure they encounter, and that the welcoming and positive atmosphere of a carnival space would be a significant draw. Further, the inviting carnivality inherent within mealtimes seems to provide an opportunity for the children to play with the power differential they experience because of the pressure that practitioners are under. The carnival space of mealtimes embodies a chronotope riddled with potential and anticipation of what is possible. It presents an inviting and potentially irresistible occasion in which children can engage in carnivality that personifies subversion and topsy turvies; playful carnivalesque performances; the parodying of one another and of the social order that presides outside of this space. Their enjoyment of this suggests strongly that the children understand the pressure they are under and reject it, perhaps subconsciously or not; challenging and/or ignoring the power hierarchy that the curriculum dictates, constructing a different, resistant space where these pressures cease to have any authority.

6.2.3 Grotesque realism, subversion and carnival jouissance

Two examples within the data highlight the children's engagement with what Bakhtin terms 'carnival abuses' (RHW) which, far from having the negative associations that abuses have today, are positive additions to a carnival environment signifying a means of mocking fear and generating renewal and rebirth (Cohen, 2011). The examples that illustrate this positive abuse show the use of grotesque imagery in 'name-calling' and children Marcus', Sebastian's and Megan's blowing raspberries and continuing to do so, despite Emily clearly signalling her disapproval; and, beyond this, seemingly experiencing a heightened sense of enjoyment *because* someone was opposing their behaviour. When we see this behaviour as carnivality and representative of the regenerating and affirmative imagery Bakhtin argues is inherent within the carnivalesque, we can flip our thinking from seeing mildly abusive and derisive behaviour directed at or around an individual, to seeing children engaging in positive behaviour that elicits a sense of jouissance (Barthes, 1975) or unbridled joy in them. Adults were not present in either scenario and the events were recorded by the children's head

cameras whilst they were either in the midst of snack time or sitting around a table post-snack time. Adults adopting a view that children are engaging in positive carnivality in situations like this could be of benefit to children. However, this does not address the potential issue in KM 'Thomas the Tank and Raspberries' in which Emily appears mildly distressed when the other children seem not to listen to or respond to her. As noted in the analysis, a natural response from ECEC practitioners might be to try and help Emily resolve her issue and highlight to the other children the negative effect that their words and actions are having on her (Holmes, 2000). This raises questions over whether practitioner intervention would be necessary so that the children gleaned important messages about empathy, kindness, and the impact our words and actions can have on others; and whether Emily requires adult assistance to resolve the dispute. I argue that if we frame this encounter, and similar encounters more generally, as carnivality practitioners may not need to intervene as the lessons for children about socialisation that we might think need addressing *for* the children's sake, the children may be negotiating and learning about *from* the carnivality of the encounter. Further, the lack of adult presence in these types of situations, and the ensuing enjoyment and inherent positivity that most of the children experience as a result, may be lost and quashed with adult intervention. That there will often be a child or small number of children who seem not to experience joy or jouissance in these types of encounters may seem an apt reason for adults to curb them. Rather, if necessary, perhaps practitioners and children could address the issues involved together, away from this carnival experience, whilst helping all of the children to recognise the inherent positivity in carnivality. This is an important lesson for all - that at times human beings experience and/or are presented with resistance to their way of thinking and it is important that we learn how to cope. This could be communicated, and support provided to develop the resilience necessary to understand that it is not helpful to take these encounters personally. Arguably, this could send children important messages about the positivity of taking responsibility for our own happiness. That is not to say that practitioners should never intervene in situations that herald base vindictiveness or cruelty towards others; only that perhaps it is not necessary or, ultimately, helpful to intervene if adults can establish the presence of carnivality in the scene.

6.2.4 The possibilities in carnival jouissance

Barthes' (1975) concept of jouissance is raised a number of times throughout the analysis chapter because I argue it has close links to the ambivalent positivity and 'anti-reality'

integral to carnivality. In particular, the potential for carnival behaviours to be viewed as negative in today's climate, where laughter no longer enjoys the positive understandings it was afforded in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, resonates with the similar situation that jouissance potentially finds itself in. I argue, both Rabelaisian carnival and Barthesian jouissance involve ideas that adults can find difficult to reconcile when placed in the context of young children (Holmes and Marra, 2006). There are links between carnivality and jouissance that need highlighting here in order to better understand possible reasons for children's capacity for both within for ECEC settings. Firstly, carnivality has a thirst for 'degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level' (RHW) and is a space where children can engage with grotesque imagery, thereby lowering adult authority through engaging with ideas that dominant social discourses view as distasteful; and appreciating the empowerment generated by the control they have over their own bodies. This resonates with jouissance, Barthes conception of which not only involves experiencing intense and powerful pleasure and joy, but also has a connection with corporeal sensuality and sexuality. I argue that aspects of the data show children engaging with these concepts, as well as suggestions that sensuality, sexuality, degradation and grotesque imagery do not consistently sit well with PRs, perhaps in the face of held perceptions of childhood innocence. This idea is explored in more depth later in the chapter, when we look at the role of the practitioners' perspectives in this discussion. From the children's perspective, however, the opportunity to be part of a carnival space that holds the potential to experience feelings of jouissance, seems to afford them an opportunity to revel in the few examples of power and control they have experienced and to harness them, celebrate them and feel more empowered by them. Loizou's argument, that power is a feature of humour that children use to move around within their social surroundings (Loizou, 2007) resonates deeply with this.

6.2.5 Carnivality and its expression via each, unique child: Annabelle's story

Of the eighteen children who took part in this study, each was unique, because all children are: an important idea to remember when exploring children's relationship with carnivality. Children are in the world as individuals who engage with it and respond to it, discretely *and* collectively. This can be seen within the findings of this study as, although it can be argued that some children follow a pattern and share many experiences of carnivality, no two

children can be seen as engaging with and responding to it in an identical manner. So, personality comes to the fore, as does the notion that people experience life, and the pressures it wields, differently (Morisseau et al, 2017). It follows then that if we accept part of adults' role is to help children in their journey to become adults, these children may feel under pressure to get the process of becoming an adult 'right'. It can be argued children often sense that there is a 'correct' way of doing things according to others and these children may be less inclined to jump into a carnival space head-first; whereas others may be much more likely to join a carnival space and resist adult pressure. I argue carnivality presents all children with an outlet; a chance to escape their lived experience of pressure, momentarily. Consequently, it may be even more important for adults to be mindful, in particular, of children who may not be able to join in with the spirit of carnivalesque as readily, to ensure that we are sensitive to their perception of and sensitivity to pressure. The scenario above is one that could apply to children of a similar temperament to Annabelle who, in the data, hardly featured at all. Informal discussions with the PRs, recorded in my field diary, however, show her to have an extremely complex character. The practitioners reported that at times Annabelle was openly defiant but at others, she was reticent, shy, and stood apart from the group watching scenes unfold. The instances where she engaged in defiance appeared premeditated and did not involve anybody else, and are therefore not classifiable as carnivalesque defiance, which involves the collective (RHW). Everyday (i.e. non carnivalesque) defiance can be about all manner of things, and when not enshrined in a carnivalesque sense of the world, can be received as negative (Brazelton and Sparrow, 2002). Carnivalesque defiance is far from negative and is an occurrence that as practitioners we need to nurture, and ensure children have the opportunity to experience and engage in for them to experience empowerment and the act of negotiating and attempting to understand social conventions (Albon and Rosen, 2015). Later in the chapter, in relation to practitioners nurturing carnivalesque defiance, I argue the case for their engagement with positive disregard (Tallant, 2015) as a means of facilitating children's carnivalesque experiences.

6.2.6 'Underground, over ground, wandering free': the dualistic culture of the children's carnivality

The findings suggest that the children can engage in carnivality in an underground culture, away from adults, but that they can also experience carnivality *with* adults. A number of the KMs involve only children. As such, it appears that they are inhabiting an underworld, away

from the watchful eye of adults, who we could argue represent the authoritative 'ruling classes' (RHW). They exert power over the children and drive comic behaviour 'underground', establishing a divide between official and 'folk' culture (RHW). White (2013) also notes that children have the capability to choose to inhabit this underground space that, necessarily, is positioned outside the official sphere. Entering this space allows the children to experience a sense of liberation from the power that adults hold over them in their everyday experiences in the setting. Further, she suggests that in addition to the power adults have over children, children are also afforded very little power in such circumstances (ibid). I argue that entering a carnivalesque space is something that children need to experience to enjoy a feeling of empowerment. They can play around with their understanding of power relations and where they sit within the ECEC setting and wider social hierarchy. This suggestion is in line with several other theorists who argue that children inhabit carnivalesque spaces in all manner of different educational settings, providing an opportunity for them to experience power differently (Cohen, 2009, 2015; Lensmire, 2011; White; 2009, Da Silva Iddings and McAfferty, 2007; Odergaard and Kellestad, 2013; Oksnes, 2012). Further, engaging in the form of free and equal interaction that the openness of carnival spaces engenders (RHW) this underground culture means that children can form alliances with other children: those with whom they may not usually socialise outside of this space. The main benefit of this is that it facilitates a wider range of social experiences for children, enabling them to gain more experience of socialising and the rules and potential pitfalls that can arise, depending on the individuals with whom one is socialising and the nature of interaction that is taking place.

In the latter scenario - mentioned at the beginning of this section - adults join children in their carnival and, as hierarchies are banished during the process of adults and children coming together. Here, equality reigns and the power relations that exist outside the carnival space are suspended, temporarily (RHW). I argue that this occurrence highlights an issue in framing children's humour as 'Bakhtinian' carnivalesque and supports why it might be more profitable, instead, to think of young children's humour as carnivality: a completely new idea inspired by and almost identical to (but not quite) Bakhtinian carnivalesque. The 'not quite' is key. The difference between carnivalesque and the notion of carnivality has to do with context. In the context of ECEC the findings of this study show that children and adults do come together within carnival spaces. However, also seen is the speed with which children can flit between a carnival world and the 'real' world when engaging in carnivality with

adults. This is something not seen in Bakhtin's sense of the carnival. It seems the carnival experience involving adults and children is not sustained in the same way it is in some of the examples when only children are involved. This suggests that either it is not profitable to consider the children humour here as carnivality, or that this carnival space differs from the one Bakhtin describes, even if only subtly. For argument's sake, let us think of this scenario as Bakhtinian carnivalesque, and therefore that the whole encounter is classed as a carnival experience, even when a child stops laughing because, for example, they disagree with a practitioner's words or actions. I argue that this would be inaccurate, because when an encounter appears interrupted, such as when Emily challenges Elsa over who is on the phone in their imaginary play scene (see analysis chapter), it appears that at these moments the carnival has ceased to be. Moreover, as Garvey suggests, in these situations, as children are stepping out of the play frame (Garvey, 1977) to negotiate and 'direct' the play through metacommunication (Trawick-Smith, 2013), I argue that they are stepping out of the 'carnival frame' – momentarily remembering the hierarchical gap between themselves and practitioners, until the issue has been resolved. They then step back into the carnival once they are content that the adult understands the situation, as the child sees it; reflecting Bakhtin's focus on the temporality and physicality of carnival spaces (RHW) and extending his theory, remaining faithful to its central and irrevocable tenets. This line of reasoning illustrates how it is profitable for us to adopt this view and frame young children's humour as Bakhtinian inspired 'carnivality'. Another potentially profitable contemplation is that the act of stepping in and out of a carnival space when with adults affords children the opportunity to explore the hidden dialogicality (DI) within all utterances, potentially assisting them in negotiating the complexity of the social world. Further, I argue that this has potential implications for the way adults view and support the children's emotions. Children can apparently dip in and out of carnival, experiencing a sudden dispositional transformation but rapidly returning to their previous emotional state of carnival jouissance. The children's emotional oscillation illustrates a possible reason why adults' perception of children's emotions might be as "lesser than" adults' emotions. Importantly, I refer here to children's experienced emotions *not* to their ability to regulate emotion, as it is well-documented within the literature that young children need support with the development of self-regulation (Whitebread, 2012). Children's capacity to shift from one emotion to another at such speed may contribute to practitioners' misconceiving children's emotions as less 'real' or less complex than those of adults; and that a simple 'shivvying up' (a phrase appropriated by PR, Bulda, in the data) from adults can help restore equilibrium for children. In addition, this

'flitting' behaviour may also contribute to practitioner's difficulty in recognising carnivalesque spaces due to the lack of fluidity therein resulting in some of children's carnivalesque experiences presenting as fragmented and messy. The idea that practitioners could be misled by children's capacity to shift in this way resonates with research into children's schemas (Athey, 1976) as Athey suggests much of children's schematic behaviour can be misinterpreted as 'flitting' and therefore perceived as inconsequential, in line with the suggestion that a similar fate could befall some examples of children's carnivality.

Given the ideas presented here, I argue it could be useful for practitioners to consider children's humour as carnivality and therefore to consider and attempt to empathise with children's lived experiences or 'pravda'. Bakhtin argues that this is an essential element of the carnivalesque experience (RHW) and is opposed to 'istina', or 'abstract truth'. I argue that children encounter this every day, outside of carnival spaces, via adults' accounts and explanations of aspects of a world that children have yet to experience. These ideas have significant implications for the way adults interpret play scenes that involve the carnivality of practitioners and children, and I will return to this idea in the next section, as well as in the concluding thoughts in this chapter.

6.3 Practitioners as 'child experts', carnival pleasures, and the trouble with 'jouissance'

As identified at the beginning of the chapter, this section places the PRs as the focus and discusses findings that present practitioner perspectives alongside potential barriers to ECEC embracing children's carnivalesque humour. This section, therefore, addresses the study's second research question: RQ2. What is a Bakhtinian interpretation of adults' experiences and perceptions of humour inside and outside of an early years' setting, and how do these relate to those of young children? In addition, highlighted here is the potential struggle depicted in the data, sparked by the PRs and children's fundamental differences, and accentuated by the notion of children's carnivality as a facilitative language communicating their shared lived experiences of 'carnival jouissance'.

6.3.1 Adults' relationship with children's 'carnival jouissance'

Having discussed the concept of jouissance in relation to the children's experiences, I will explore it here in relation to practitioner responses and thoughts, as found and analysed in the data. The range of examples of children enjoying playing with carnivality through grotesque

imagery, topsy-turvy ideas and a sense of humour shared by the children as a collective, is present in the findings. I argue that an apt term to capture the spirit of this carnivalesque enjoyment is 'carnival jouissance' inspired by Barthes', 1975 concept. The complex concept of jouissance combines ideas which usually sit at the opposite end of the spectrum from one another and this idea is one I argue is particularly pertinent when considering practitioners capacity to understand and support children's carnivality. For Barthes, jouissance is pleasure of the highest order and is often associated with the form of pleasure associated with sensuality (ibid). Further, as highlighted within the analysis chapter, Grace and Tobin add to this, suggesting that this '...intense, heightened form of pleasure, [involves] a momentary loss of subjectivity. It knows no bounds' (Grace and Tobin 1997: 177). Another way to think of jouissance might be as unbridled joy: a concept which conjures images of the highest form of happiness possible for human beings but that is encapsulated in a shroud of innocence. This definition seems to work perfectly well when wishing to characterise children's ultimate experiences of joy, as well as remaining within the bounds of our British sensibilities and sitting well with dominant constructions of children as innocent (Taylor, 2015). However, when we consider children's interest in and engagement with the contentious and perhaps less mainstream carnivalesque themes presented in this study, this definition seems to fall short. Returning to Barthes' conception of jouissance, if we accept that sensuality and even sexuality (Barthes, 1975) have a role to play in this reading of ultimate pleasure, suddenly this does not sit so comfortably with practitioners (Howard in Barthes, 1975), particularly when contemplating 'innocent' children in the scenario. This discomfort, Jones (2003) suggests, may relate to the presence of a '…spectral monster…[who] shapes the possible pleasures (and dangers) in the early childhood centre' (2003: 247). She argues that, akin to Tobin's (1997) argument, ECEC is considered to be hostile to desire and pleasure due to '…the historical shift from the identification and removal of the very rare individual paedophile to the fear of the spectral pervert (and therefore the fear of accusation), [which] has had a broad and problematic impact on what counts as professionalism and what counts as early childhood care and education' (Jones, 2003: 248). The shift in mood within English ECEC from one of professional trust to one of professional suspicion, generated by mass anxiety over the potential sexual abuse of young children, is reflected in Jones' argument. The idea of sexuality and sensuality as taboo within ECEC may seem worlds apart from children's engagement with carnivalesque humour. However, in this study the children's interest in carnivalesque humour involved them being amused by (and, therefore receiving pleasure from) grotesque imagery and the lower bodily stratum (RHW) (as illustrated in the

data by Sebastian's suggestion that sticky playdough could go 'on your knickers'; Sian, Simon, and Oscar's interest in poo; Oliver 1's attention to toilets; and Oliver 2's amusement at falling on his bottom) a connection between sensuality, sexuality and the lower body can be seen. These references to the children's interest in grotesque imagery warrant further investigation into the idea that this poses a challenge for practitioners as a result of held dominant constructions of childhood jarring with their enjoyment of humour with such bawdy themes (McKenzie, 2005). Worthy of note is that focusing on genre, then utilizing a variety of dialogic concepts from the analytic framework, worked well; specifically, when analysing the children's (as opposed to the PRs) voices and humour. This may have been because the dominant genre of the children's humour was carnivalesque (and, as seen above, much of it 'grotesque' carnivalesque): a consistent theme throughout. This approach was less successful when analysing the practitioner's voices, however, and on reflection this highlights the significance of some fundamental differences between the PRs and children's perspectives. When focusing on the practitioner voices it transpired that the different natures of the children and PRs KMs meant the time-space (chronotope) of each PR utterance (in which only PRs appeared) resonated with the research questions much more. Therefore, whilst still utilizing a dialogic approach to analysis, the focus for the practitioner utterances became chronotope and this helped to identify the idea that adults may not be comfortable with children's engagement with particular themes: an idea explored in more detail in the next section.

6.4 Young children's carnivality: a language foreign to ECEC practitioners?

Given the long periods of time practitioners spend with children during which they witness their forays into the world of jouissance on a regular basis, coupled with the pressure they are under from a policy and cultural perspective to guide children successfully into school, it may be challenging for them to see and acknowledge the ease with which children can slip into this jubilant state. Every working day, early childhood practitioners are bystanders who witness children's adventures in an alternative world of carnivality. Practitioners may even have opportunities to join children in their carnival jouissance, but only on the periphery, due to the responsibility and accountability they acquire on entering adulthood. These acquisitions may mean practitioners are unable to immerse themselves in carnivality. Children can do so because they have not yet acquired a sense of what ultimate responsibility and accountability look and feel like. They are therefore unable to understand or empathise with the curbing effect they can

have on adults' capability to let go of inhibitions and freefall into blissful oblivion. They do not understand that, as adults', our responsibilities are ever present, tucked behind any attempts we make to escape them.

In the context of this study the data suggest that children may be perceived as 'that' individual - in a troubling sense - and this may be difficult to understand and easy to miscomprehend if being fluent in children's language is a prerequisite for this. The data suggest that, despite an ardent and visceral desire to embrace and appreciate children's humour, the practitioners may not be fluent in children's carnival vernacular. This suggests that there may be aspects of children's experiences in the ECEC setting that the practitioners cannot understand, yet. For example, as Ana and Bulda highlight in the data, there are occasions when children seem to want to engage in laughter and humour and fun, regardless of its content, and it is not always possible to understand the roots of and empathise with children's laughter. If, as suggested earlier, this carnival jouissance is not fully accessible to adults, it is possible that empathy with children' experience, in this regard, is also unavailable. I argue that the findings from this study, as highlighted throughout this chapter, provide an opportunity for ECEC practitioners to learn to speak children' carnival vernacular, and this this would be of significant benefit to children, and practitioners. I will return to this point in the concluding section of this thesis.

6.5 ECEC practitioners, core values and children' carnivality

The following section address the third of this study's research questions that asks:

RQ3. How do these experiences and perceptions, interpreted in this way, relate to the pedagogical significance of humour within an early years setting? Initially, a discussion of values is presented, drawing on the evidence located within the Literature Review. Themes presented in this initial discussion are then woven through the argument in this section, highlighting potential discord between the values that underpin policy and curriculum, and the PRs own values, attitudes and beliefs. The section finishes by considering the place of humour within English early childhood pedagogy in light of the impact that these values have and initiates a discussion of how this can be addressed, that is followed up in the final section.

The data suggest that central to possibility of children' carnivality being embraced and facilitated is the way that practitioner's values influence their practice. Before looking at evidence in the findings from the PRs, let us think more broadly about the values underpinning ECEC in this country, given Bakhtin's thoughts about the relationship between internally persuasive and authoritative discourses (DI). Following Bakhtin's line of argument, we could say that internally persuasive discourses, that house personal values, are often influenced by the authoritative discourses that drive policy and curriculum; so, we begin by revisiting ideas about values that are highlighted within the Literature Review. According to Faulkner and Coates (2013) values that underpin current practice in ECEC in England from a curricular perspective, centre around notions of children' uniqueness; the importance of developing positive relationships; the significance of a nurturing and enabling environment; and the importance of learning and development. Humour can play a central role in all of those values. However, a review of the literature revealed that the attention to humour given by the EYFS (DfE, 2017) is limited to a small section in the non-statutory Development Matters guidance focusing on children' development of a capacity to understand jokes. This does not indicate that humour is high on the government's list of priorities. Further, as the literature illustrates an evaluation of early education policies revealed that 'soft skills' that are less easily quantifiable are often neglected. This is despite evidence to suggest that these skills are valued by practitioners and education settings (Heckman and Kautz, 2012). Further, they suggest that this is potentially negative for young children, given the significance of these skills for learning and development. Heckman and Kautz (2012) suggest programmes that do nurture soft skills should play a major part in the formation of policy throughout the sector. I would argue that the idea that soft skills are not considered of value, policy and curricula-wise, and accepting the argument that humour may not even be seen as worthy of the label 'soft skill', suggests a comprehensive lack of pedagogical value placed on humour within a wide range of early years curricula, globally (Tallant, 2015).

Belsky et al. (2007) and Schweinhart et al. (2005) suggest investing in sufficiently qualified staff to look after and meet the learning needs of young children is becoming fundamental in the English ECEC field: an idea echoed in the influential Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study (Sylva et al. 2010). However, does being 'sufficiently qualified' relate to practitioner's engagement with children' humour? The literature informs us that the Early years educator (Level 3) qualifications criteria (DfE, 2013) appear to cover all elements

of ECEC that will enable a practitioner to: understand the relevant theory relating to children' (birth to five years old) learning and development; support and assess children' learning and development and prepare them for school; keep children safe from harm; engage and work with parents/carers for the benefit of children (DfE, 2013). Underpinned by a discourse that reflects ideas of progress, development, monitoring, assessment and preparation, it is perhaps unsurprising that the document skirts the intrinsic value of supporting children by attending to their individual needs; recognising the value of relating to children as human beings rather than human becomings; and understanding the importance of and impact that the non-physical environment can have on children and how practitioners can affect this positively. Failure to refer to these ideas, explicitly, results in directing practitioner's attention away from the value of so called 'soft skills' (Schweinhart et al, 2015) a label which in this context could be applied to humour (ill-advisedly, according to this study's data) and means that these attributes are far from being a focus of ECEC practice. Further, as argued within the Literature Review, placing emphasis elsewhere elsewhere may well create a situation where practitioners are duty-bound to respond to the criteria that curricula and policy deem as being the most significant. Subsequently, as raised in the analysis chapter, it follows that this may present a barrier to practitioners valuing and paying meaningful attention to children's carnivality.

Children's carnivality potentially involves features that do not necessarily sit well with our English, cultural sensibilities (Taylor, 2013). For example, the data shows that children's carnivality can involve: a challenge to adult hierarchy and power; disparagement and degradation of that hierarchy and power; enjoyment of humour at what are perceived as 'inappropriate times', for example the presence of scatological humour at meal times – arguably a threat to the upholding of English etiquette and social conventions due to them being a time 'meant' only to involve 'sanitary' imagery that reflects the need for cleanliness due to the presence of food, and the potential for illness if cleanliness does not preside; children's engagement with the potentially taboo concept of 'jouissance'; and the notion that children's carnivality treads a fine line between pleasure and displeasure and represents ambivalence in all manner of ways. Adding to this, significantly, the PRs voices in the findings suggest that they may be caught betwixt and between focusing solely on the children as they 'are' and being prompted by an authoritative discourse-fuelled pressure to focus on how their practice influences who children 'will be': a situation that potentially sits ECEC

practitioners between a rock and a hard place, leaving them unsure about how to reconcile any differences between their own and policy-driven values.

6.6 Young children, carnivality and ECEC: implications for practice and further research

The discussion in this chapter so far leads us to consider how these ideas relate to current ECEC practice in England and what nature of further research relating to these themes, might benefit young children and the field. The following section looks into this further and addresses the study's final research question: RQ4. What are the implications of interpreting young children's humour and perceptions of young children's humour through a Bakhtinian lens, for early childhood education?

6.6.1 Repositioning humour: from soft 'non' skill to pedagogically valued disposition?

The data from my pilot study provide evidence to suggest that elements of children's humour, as seen in an early childhood setting, can be explained by Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque and that this illumination is potentially important for young children. Questions are raised, however, about practitioners' conscious and subconscious willingness and ability to accept and facilitate children's engagement with this kind of humour. If young children are to have the opportunity to engage in carnivalesque humour and explore their world enveloped by its renewing and liberating potential (White, 2013) it seems imperative for early childhood practitioners, and the field as a whole, to embrace children's carnivalesque humour. Nevertheless, there appear to be a number of potential barriers to its recognition as pedagogically valuable.

Firstly, the perpetuated construct of children as innocent is consolidated by political rhetoric presenting children as 'adults in training' (Sorin, 2005) which accentuates a deficit model of children that ties in with Sorin's notion of children as 'powerless and in need of adult protection' (Sorin, 2005: 12). Taylor's (2013) proposal that, '[i]n the western world it just feels like 'second nature' to maintain a tight grip on natural childhood as a state of innocence and purity and to want to preserve it' (2013: 114) strengthens this observation. These ideas highlight the tangible incapacity of the early childhood sector to embrace young children's

need to engage with humour that contradicts images of 'innocence' and 'purity' (White, 2009). Tobin supports this, suggesting that, '[w]e speak freely of the needs and wants of children and their teachers, but we only whisper their desires' (Tobin 1997: 2) leading us to ask whether adults are afraid of children's desires, and how they experience pleasure, in case it contradicts our picture of children as the epitome of innocence (Tobin, 1997).

We could liken practitioners who adopt a romantic view of childhood to Enlightenment Romanticists, who exercised 'idealism…[and] false concept of the role and limitations of subjective consciousness' (Bakhtin, 1984: 125). As a result of this, practitioners could be misconceiving children, their intentions and their attempts to communicate, just as the Enlightenment writer/philosopher, Voltaire, apparently misread what Rabelais was communicating through his carnivalesque writing (Bakhtin, 1984).

Sorin and Galloway's (2006) extensive study identifies ten constructs of children that they argue are prevalent throughout the world. In addition to the previously mentioned child as adult in training, the list includes the child as innocent (linking to the Apollonian view of childhood) and the child as evil (linking to the Dionysian view of childhood) (Jenks, 2006) but also includes: the snowballing child, who is not out of control, but is perceived as having more control over adults than adults have over them, and needs to be 'reigned in'; the out of control child, who uses power negatively in order to manipulate people; the child as noble/saviour, who is 'beautiful and beloved' as the innocent child, but also takes on a saint-like quality; the child as miniature adult, where childhood is not a distinct phase and children are the same as adults; the child as commodity, where children are seen as objects to be consumed by adults who are infatuated with childhood; the child as victim 'of social and political forces'; and the agentic child, an optimistic construct where the child is talked of as 'being as opposed to 'becoming' (Sorin and Galloway, 2006: 13-18).

6.7 Limitations of the study

A number of issues presented throughout the course of this research and it is important to recognise their potential effect on the findings.

Significantly, PR Bulda left the ECE setting where the research based before the second round of data collection. This affected the dynamic of our dialogic research partnership, but we rallied and developed a new dynamic in which the four of us worked together to build upon the first stages of the data collection and initial analysis process. Secondly, I gained the impression that it was extremely difficult for the PRs to find time for this research as a result of their busy working lives that reflect the involved nature of ECEC practice, generally. This presented some issues, particularly with respect to needing to end Dialogic Encounters before they were ready to end. Potentially this meant that not only was potential data missed, but I sensed that often the PRs were clock-watching, and this affected their ability to focus. Lastly, I encountered technical difficulties with the Transana software and saving of data. This issue impacted on the data collection process when Transana failed and I lost data that had taken a significant length of time to piece together for us to watch and respond to in the Dialogic Encounters. I was able to overcome the issues, eventually, but it took away valuable time from the Dialogic Encounters: time that was already in short supply. These are all important factors that would need to be borne in mind if looking to engage in a similar research process in the future.

6.8 Implications for practice and further research

6.8.1 Children's carnivality: inspiration for a paradigm shift in ECEC from postmodernism to protocarnivalism?

Children's rights rhetoric and post-modern constructions of childhood that present children as having agency mean that the idealised role of the practitioner is as co-constructor and co-learner (Ødegaard, 2007) and the child is recognised as strong, rich and capable (Edwards, Gandini and Foreman, 1998). Epstein's (1997) challenge over the concept of post-modernism resonates here and potentially facilitates the continuance of a faithful approach to the Bakhtinian tenets of unfinalisiability and uncertainty. Epstein argues that the post-modern construction of childhood, reflected within the Reggio Emilia approach, and admired within UK early childhood and on many UK training courses (Abbott and Nutbrown, 2001), has a strong temporal emphasis on the past via its conception as a paradigm that comes 'post' or after modernism. He argues for a reframing of thinking that embraces the ideas of 'proto-' and 'trans-', 'reject[ing] the radical finitude' of postmodernism, in favour of, what I argue, is

an inherently carnivalesque perspective. Epstein asks us to consider what can be 'born from this feast of [the] death [of post-modernism] and what will be resurrected from that which dies?' and suggests 'it is these "proto-" and "trans-" phenomena-as signs of birth and resurrection-that will mark the long period of postmodernity, which is ahead, and which comes after postmodernism' (1997: np).

With Epstein's proposition in mind, I turn to the idea of trainee early childhood practitioners' engagement in courses that champion positive and constructive images of children: in other words, images that conflict with definitions perpetuating ideas of deficit and innocence. Training as a professional within an environment that advocates such positive ideas suggests, even if these progressive constructions do not dominate, they should at least present pause for thought against prevailing construct of children as naturally developing and innocent (Taylor, 2015; Dahlberg et al, 2006). Perhaps it is not enough simply to advocate and champion certain approaches, however, due to a kind of cultural hegemony, meaning that authoritative current and historical discourses will prevail if practitioners are not encouraged to analyse how such monologic discourses (Bakhtin, 1984) affect their practice (Sorin, 2005). Instead, practitioners are left to lay new discourses on across existing ones, effecting a layer-cake approach to early years' practice. In the role of co-constructor and co-learner, practitioners would be perfectly set to understand, accept and embrace children's relationship with the carnivalesque. However, the lowest section of the layer-cake, or the most ingrained of their held discourses, can act as a barrier to change, by filtering through and determining their approach to practice. If practitioners are guided by prevailing ideas of children as innocent, this will affect their expectations of children. Bakhtin suggests that practitioner expectations of children are responsive, stating that, 'all real and integral understanding is actively responsive…and the speaker himself is oriented precisely toward such an actively responsive understanding' (Bakhtin 1986: 69). Thus, when early childhood practitioners anticipate children's responses, the authoritative discourse of innocence may be overly influential. This leads to the potential for a paradigm shift in English ECEC, and perhaps the field more broadly, from postmodernism to protocarnivalism which I will return to this in the final paragraph of this chapter.

White suggests that in engaging with children's carnivalesque humour, '[t]he teacher plays an important role…since her task is not only to recognize this disposition, but also to respond appropriately' (White, 2013: 905). She suggests that a possible obstacle to this is that the

teachers' accountability may prevent them from recognising and responding to this form of humour. Gartrell (2006) suggests that practitioner engagement with humour in a classroom context is a 'high level' skill: another potential reason for practitioner concern. A preoccupation with the 'serious' and contained nature of ECE, the skill involved and the accountability it presents is reflected in the idea that, '[l]aughter and play do not allow themselves to be controlled and may therefore not be understood by reason that aims to find causes and seek defined goals' (Øksnes, 2008: 162). Returning to the notion of children projecting identities or roles onto adults, to seek out who has the control, practitioners need to be aware of and negotiate given roles depending on the context in which the carnival is playing out. For example, if children are engaging in humour together away from adult gaze, the practitioner's role may be as authority figure. Consequently, practitioners could deliberately employ a concept I call 'positive disregard' or make the pedagogical decision to 'turn a blind eye', gifting children the freedom to communicate in their underground world. Da Silva Iddings and McAfferty's (2007) findings suggest it is not necessary for children to be unaware of this disregard, and that it could be positive for them to note an adult's subtle communication of compliance (via eye contact or a smile), as this may even enrich their carnivalesque experience. I offer the term 'positive disregard' as an alternative to 'skilful neglect' (Labbett, 1988). The distinction is that Labbett's term describes how teachers/practitioners understand and act on the idea they are not always responsible for what children should *know* and therefore, in particular situations ought to resist the urge to intervene in children's *learning*. Positive disregard requires practitioners to recognise their limited responsibility for what children *should do,* or the way they *should act*, given the multidisciplinary nature of ECE. This resonates particularly with the discourse-generated ideal of children engaging in play that reflects their innocence and connection with nature. In essence, 'to join the carnival, or not to join the carnival?' that is the pedagogical question; I argue that practitioners need to embrace children's carnivality and recognise the its strong presence in early childhood practice, generally, in order that children are supported meaningfully and effectively in the nursery environment.

The influence of gender, relating to the children and the adults in this study, has not been addressed significantly. However, Brownhill's (2016) study into the perceived characteristics of male role models in early years in England suggests that there are five male teachers/practitioner traits that are associated with being a good role model, of which one is a

good sense of humour. This was not a central theme within the study and resultantly Brownhill does not discuss how this finding in any detail, including how it may relate to female teachers/practitioners. He does, however, suggest that male practitioners may wish to consider the authenticity of their approach to practice rather than focusing too heavily on characteristic traits of role models which raises a question about the link between humour and authenticity. Any further discussion of this would be pure speculation but the idea is one that I would argue warrants further exploration and is a worthy topic for further research.

The ideas from the analysis in this study of: the need for practitioners to engage in positive disregard in order that children can enjoy the benefits of their innate carnivality; the benefits of adopting a dialogic lens to better understand young children's humour; the potential for children, through their carnivality, to teach practitioners about their capacity to oscillate between chronotopes and the benefits this may hold; and the suggestion that it would be positive for ECEC to adopt a new paradigm, moving away from the (ironically) backwards-facing idea of postmodernism, to the future-bound potential of protocarnivalism; are, I argue, important contributions to the field of ECEC Lensmire's aide memoire, that we need to recognise how, '[s]eriousness of purpose can lead to…fear of failing in an important endeavour…' and if we continue to ignore children's carnivalesque humour '…we risk undermining the sort of joyful, playful relation to the world and each other that would actually allow us to look fearlessly at the world and tell the truth about it' (Lensmire, 2011) may assist us in further, meaningful exploration of these concepts.

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White, E.J. (2009) A Bakhtinian analysis of toddler metaphorocity (unpublished PhD thesis).

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Definitions and abbreviations

Terms of reference:

Practitioner Researchers   PRs

Child Researchers   Children

Early Childhood Education and Care   ECEC

Early Years' Settings   EYS's

Abbreviated Bakhtinian works:

Rabelais and His World   RHW

The Dialogic Imagination   DI

Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics   PDP

Discourse in the Novel   DiN

Glossary

Carnivality

A term created to define young children's carnivalesque humour in an Early Childhood Education and Care context, due to the distinctions between Bakhtinian carnivalesque and children's humorous carnival behaviours within this context.

Carnival jouissance

A concept that combines Bakhtinian 'carnivalesque' (RHW) and Barthesian 'jouissance' (1975) to describe a type of joy that children can experience when engaging in carnivality. The concept encapsulates forms of expression and enjoyment experienced by children within a carnival context that are not necessarily consistent with dominant discourses of childhood innocence (Taylor, 2015).

Chronotopes

Socially constructed time-space configurations with a specific narrative character that represent cultural practices and values, and that operationalize the framing of the interactional situation and its actors' (Kumpulainen and Rajala, 2015: 90)

Positive disregard

I offer the term 'positive disregard' as an alternative to 'skilful neglect' (Labbett, 1988). The distinction is that Labbett's term describes how teachers/practitioners understand and act on the idea they are not always responsible for what children should *know* and therefore, in particular situations ought to resist the urge to intervene in children's *learning*.

Protocarnivalism

A term to describe the paradigmatic nature of carnivality in early childhood settings and offered, in this thesis, as an alternative ECEC paradigm to postmodernism.

Statement of use of work which has formed part of solely authored publications

Full details of the relevant, solely-authored publications:

Tallant, L. (2015) 'Framing young children's humour and practitioner responses it to it using a Bakhtinian carnivalesque lens', *International Journal of Early Childhood…*

Tallant, L (2015) 'Reflecting on the place of dialogue and the nature of adult motivations within early childhood research', *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal,* http://dpj.pitt.edu DOI: 10.5195/dpj.2015.147 Vol. 3

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Details of the chapters within the thesis that have been based on work from the publications

Aspects of the papers, above, can be found within:

Chapter 2: The Literature Review
Chapter 3: The Methodology
Chapter 4: The theory chapter (!)
Chapter 5: Analysis of an underworld
Chapter 6: (Non) Final (isable) Thoughts

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Example of a Practitioner Researcher Analysis Journal:

(begins on the next page)

ELSA
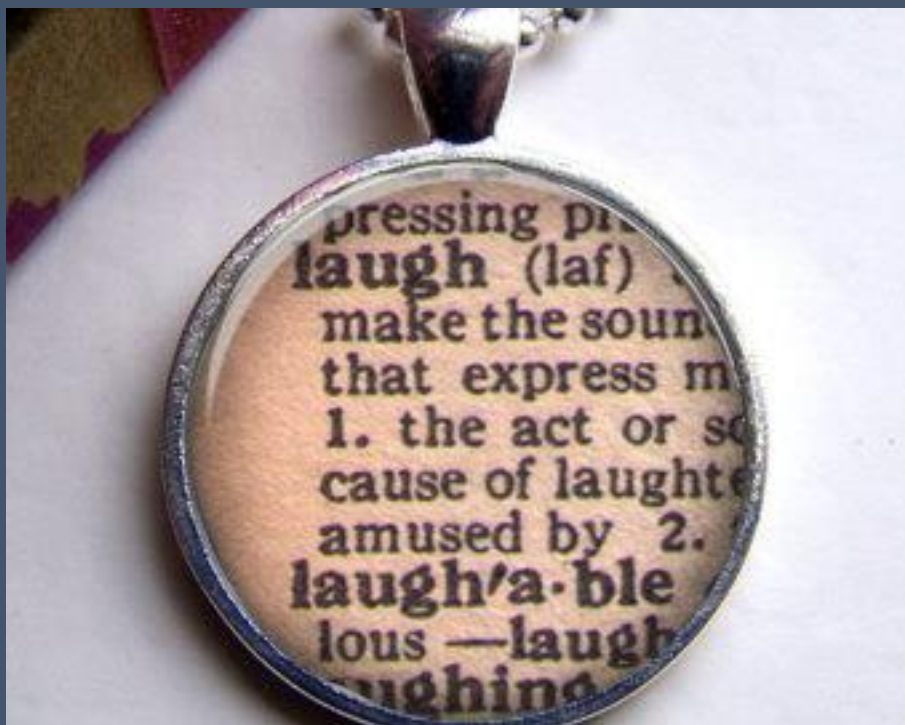
About the journal…

This journal is a compilation of data for you to read, consider and respond to. There are spaces throughout the journal for you to record your thoughts, feelings and responses to the data, and my thoughts about the data. It will be extremely helpful if you can find a few minutes to write something and you do not have to show your writing to anyone (including me!). In a few weeks' time, I will return for our last dialogic encounter. Anything you have recorded in this journal may be a helpful prompt for when we engage in a dialogue about the data. The journal contains the following elements of data:

| Key Moments and Stand Alone Snap Shots | → | Created Dialogues | → | Dialogic Concepts Applied to the Data | → | 'Humour' Key Moments conceptualised as carnivalesque |
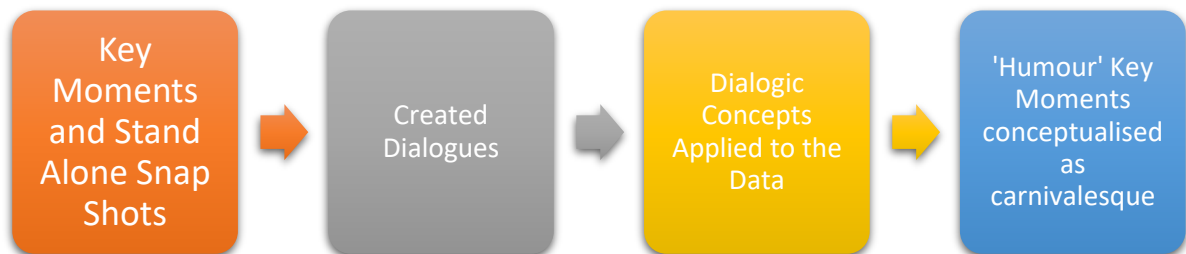
Key Moments and Stand Alone Snap Shots

Reflections

Created Dialogues

Dialogic Concepts Applied to the Data

Humour Key Moments Conceptualized as Carnivalesque

Appendix 2

Ethics Application

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE

Guidance for Staff and Students

This document is intended to provide outline guidance for UEA staff and students proposing to undertake a piece of research through the School of Education and Lifelong Learning (EDU). It is in line with the Research Ethics Policy of the University, as set out in the revised University Policy and Procedures Document which was accepted by Senate in 2013. Thus, this document and accompanying form supersedes any existing forms and protocols in use. The document should be read in conjunction with the "University Research Ethics Policy, Principle and Procedures" available at:

http://www.uea.ac.uk/rbs/rso/research_ethics/index.htm

All research carried out through EDU must be recorded with the EDU Research Ethics Committee (EDU-REC) using this form. In particular, it should be noted that:

> All University members of staff and University-registered students (i.e. postgraduate research, postgraduate taught and undergraduate students) who plan to undertake research that falls under the scope of the Ethics Principles in the Policy must obtain ethics approval for the planned research prior to the involvement of the participants via the appropriate ethics review procedure. The Procedures also apply to all individuals who are performing research which is funded or managed by the University, be this on or off University premises.

And:

> Research involving human participants ("participants") is defined broadly to include research that:
> • directly involves people in the research activities, through their physical participation. This may be invasive (e.g. surgery) or non-invasive research (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observational research) and may require the active or passive involvement of a person;
> • indirectly involves people in the research activities, through their provision of or access to personal data and/or tissue;
> • involves people on behalf of others (e.g. legal guardians of children and the psychologically or physically impaired and supervisors of people under controlled environments (e.g. prisoners, school pupils)).

All staff and students must complete and submit the form "Application for Ethical Approval of a Research Project" (attached below). All research must be documented using this form. Any research involving human participants requires full ethical review and approval by the appropriate committee. Section 5 of the form must be completed if the research involves human participants. Certain proposals will also require approval by other committees inside or outside of UEA.

Although this document speaks to the procedural requirements of the University, it is important that people also consider the broader ethical implications of their work and, if helpful, discuss these with the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee. Ethical implications should be reviewed as the research progresses and the committee must be updated about any significant changes. PGR students must discuss their application with their supervisor.

The Chair of the Committee will determine the procedure through which ethical approval will be granted. In many cases, where the project is determined to be of minimal risk, the proposal will not be seen by

the full committee but will be approved by the Chair or Deputy Chair in an expedited manner. **Research must not begin on any project until ethical approval has been granted.**

Chair of EDU Research Ethics Committee, 2013/14

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH PROJECT

This form is for all staff and students in the School of Education who are planning research. Applicants are advised to consult the school and university guidelines before preparing their application by visiting http://www.uea.ac.uk/rbs/rso/research_ethics/index.htm and reading the EDU Research Ethics Handbook. Staff and Postgraduate (PGR) student applications (including the required attachments) must be submitted electronically to Dawn Corby d.corby@uea.ac.uk, two weeks before a scheduled committee meeting. Undergraduate students and other students must follow the procedures determined by their course of study.

The Research Ethics page of the EDU website provides links to the University Research Ethics Committee, the UEA ethics policy guidelines, ethics guidelines from BERA and the ESRC, and resources from the academic literature, as well as relevant policy updates: www.uea.ac.uk/edu/research/researchethics. If you are involved in counselling research you should consult the BACP Guidelines for Research Ethics:
www.bacp.co.uk/research/ethical_guidelines.php.

Applications must be approved by the Research Ethics Committee before beginning data generation or approaching potential research participants.

1. APPLICANT DETAILS	
Name:	Laura Tallant
School:	School of Education and Lifelong Learning
Current Status:	PGR Student
If PGR Student, name of primary supervisor and programme of study: Victoria Carrington: PhD Education	
If UG student or other student, name of Course and Module:	
UEA Email address:	l.tallant@uea.ac.uk

2. PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT DETAILS:

Title:	Laughing in the Underworld: A Bakhtinian Analysis of Young Children's Humour and Practitioner Responses to and Perceptions of it, in a Nursery Setting
Start/End Dates:	November 2014 January 2014

3. FUNDER DETAILS (IF APPLICABLE):	
Funder:	N/A
	Has funding been applied for? YES NO Application Date:
	Has funding been awarded? YES NO
Will ethical approval also be sought for this project from another source? NO	
	If "yes" what is this source?

4. APPLICATION FORM FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS:

1.1. Briefly outline your research focus and questions or aims (no more than 300 words).

> ### 1. *Methodological Approach*
> I intend to conduct fieldwork for my doctoral research using a number of established dialogic research methods, many of which were operationalised by White in her 2009 doctoral research, are detailed by Sullivan (2012) and discussed by Helin (2013). 'Dialogic inquiry…involves the use of methods that 'examine' the active and responsive nature of language among participants in appropriating, constructing, and reconstructing knowledge for self and other' and is based upon the Bakhtinian notion of dialogue (Kotsopoulos, 2010). The methodological approach adopted in the research reflects this stance. The focus of the study is to explore the nature of children's humour in a nursery setting and early childhood practitioners' perceptions of, responses to and thoughts about the children's humour.

1.2. Briefly outline your proposed research methods, including who will be your research participants and where you will be working (no more than 300 words).

2. Research and Data Collection Methods that Reflect a Dialogic Stance

2.1 Observations

I will conduct video observations of child participants who are based in one room in a nursery, and are between the ages of 3 and 5 years old; and four practitioner participants who work with those children.

2.2 Cameras

Three static cameras will be set up within the nursery to film the participants as seen in research conducted by Keyes (2006), Loizou (2007) and Riordan and Marshall (2008).

In addition, all adult and child participants and I will wear a head-mounted camera. Everyone will have his/her own head-mounted camera for the duration of the research. The use of head-mounted cameras by adults is well established in research with young children (Pereira et al, no date; Darbyshire et al, 2005; Yoshida and Smith, 2008; Aslin, 2009). It provides a non-disruptive and accurate practitioner-eye view of children. Children wearing head-mounted cameras for research purposes is also well-documented in published research by Aslin (2008, 2009, 2012), Murray et al (2007) Adolf et al (2008), Clearfield (2011) and Frank (2012) due to them aiding access to a child's point of view (White, 2009).

1.3. Location Considerations

The door to the outside space will remain closed for the duration of the observation to prevent children from inadvertently filming anyone who has not given consent. A temporary ribbon curtain will be placed at the doors to the bathrooms, along with a large photo of a head-camera and an arrow from the picture to a box, in which the children will be asked to place their head cameras before going into the bathroom. An adult will also monitor the bathroom door *at all times* throughout the observation to ensure children do not forget to take off the camera before going into the bathroom.

2.4 Dialogic Encounters

'Loosely structured' biographic (Sawyer and Norris, 2012) and response interviews (dialogic encounters (White, 2009)) will be conducted and video-recorded by a static camera (as seen in research by King and Horrocks, 2010) with all participants (the biographic encounters will take place with practitioner participants only) to provide footage to be analysed by the participants and me in the secondary dialogic encounters.

2.4.1 Primary Response Encounters

Participants will view video clips of the practitioner and child participants spontaneously displaying or responding to humour, and express responses. This approach can aid recall for both adults and children (Dockett and Perry, 2005). In line with a dialogic approach, the participants will also develop categories or 'genres' (Bakhtin, 1984) (as seen in White's 2009 doctoral research – see p73 for an explanation of how participants were asked to attempt to recognize genres) for the displays of and responses to humour, which will be compared with previously, prepared carnivalesque codes.

2.4.2 Secondary Response Encounters

Secondary response encounters will be conducted (Sullivan, 2012) presenting all participants with an opportunity to watch the video of the primary dialogic encounters and explain, change and/or expand upon their comments in the initial encounter, helping to keep the participants and their views at the centre of the research - once again in keeping with a dialogic process (Sullivan, 2012).

2.5 Research Journals and Research Mediators

The four practitioner participants may keep research journals: only the practitioner participants and I (if the practitioners are in agreement) will have access to these. In response to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the

child participants will have open access to a 'research mediator' with experience of working with very young children who will answer any questions the children may have over the course of the research and beyond, and who will advocate on their behalf at all times. The research mediator will be the child participants' key person and therefore someone the children feel comfortable with and can speak to about any aspect of their participation in the research, should they wish to (Elfer et al, 2005). This information will be presented to the children in an appropriate and accessible manner as judged appropriate by their key person.

3. Data

All data will be kept secure and safe at all times – the digital data will be kept on a password protected computer within my home and all paper documents will be kept in an anonymous, secure location, also in my home.

1.3. Briefly explain how you plan to gain access to prospective research participants. (no more than 300 words).

- **If children/young people (or other vulnerable people, such as people with mental illness) are to be involved, give details of how gatekeeper permission will be obtained.**
- **Is there any sense in which participants might be 'obliged' to participate – as in the case of students, prisoners or patients – or are volunteers being recruited? Entitlement to withdraw consent must be indicated and when that entitlement lapses.**

1. Research Location

I intend to approach a local nursery setting, the manager of which is known to me in a professional context. As gatekeeper, she will provide written agreement for the study to take place at the nursery.

2. Consent

2.1 Child participants

I will provide opt-in consent forms and a project information sheet (attached) for the parents of all child participants to sign (Wiles et al, 2004). I (along with the child participants' research mediator) will consult the child participants and make clear to them that if they do not wish to take part in the research at any point all they need do is express their wishes. I will remain sensitive to the children's efforts to communicate their ongoing consent to take part and will fully respect the children's wishes should they demonstrate that they are not content at any stage of the process. I will remain sensitive to my 'ethical radar' (Skånfors, 2009) which may alert me to the various which 'children can and do express their resistance' (Skånfors, 2009:15)

2.2 Practitioner participants

I will provide opt-in consent forms for the four practitioner participants (attached). I will provide opt-in consent forms for all parents of the children who may be captured on video during the process of the pilot study, and opt-out consent forms for all early childhood practitioners in the same situation (Wiles et al, 2004). If any parents, children or practitioners do not wish to be recorded I will arrange that the recording take place when they are not present.

3. Access to Video Footage

I will make clear to all children, parents of children and early years practitioners who may be captured on video that selected sections of the video will only be used for the purpose of my research and will not be viewed by anyone other than myself, my examiners, all research participants, the child participants' parents and my doctoral supervisors (Victoria Carrington and Nigel Norris). The videos will be kept safe and secure at all times (on a password protected computer in my home). It will be made clear to all participants that they have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

1.4. **Please state who will have access to the data and what measures will be adopted to maintain the confidentiality of the research subject and to comply with data protection requirements e.g. will the data be anonymised? (No more than 300 words.)**

The only parties who will have access to the unpublished raw data are the participants, the child participants' parents, my doctoral supervisors, Victoria Carrington and Nigel Norris and myself. Any written names will be anonymised.

1.5. **Will you require access to data on participants held by a third party? In cases where participants will be identified from information held by another party (for example, a doctor or school) describe the arrangements you intend to make to gain access to this information (no more than 300 words).**

No information on participants will be required from a third party. Any information gained about the participants will come from the participants only. Should, for any reason, written information be passed on from nursery staff to me concerning the participants, all names and/or information that might make them identifiable will be anonymised, and the documents will be kept secure and safe at all times, in an anonymous, secure location in my home.

1.6. **Please give details of how consent is to be obtained (no more than 300 words).**

Copies of proposed information sheets and consent forms, written in simple, non-technical language, MUST accompany this proposal form. You may need more than one information sheet and consent form for different types of participants. (Do not include the text of these documents in this space).

I will provide opt-in consent forms (attached) for the parents of the child participants to sign (Wiles et al, 2004). I will consult the children and make clear to them that if, at any point, they do not wish to take part in the research all they need do is express their wishes, as recognised by me, the child's research mediator or any other person involved. I will to remain sensitive to the children's efforts to communicate their ongoing consent to take part and fully respect their wishes should they demonstrate they are not content with any stage of the process. I will also remain sensitive to my 'ethical radar' (Skånfors, 2009) which may alert me to the various which 'children can and do express their resistance' (Skånfors, 2009:15)

I will provide opt-in consent forms for the practitioner researchers (attached). I will provide opt-in consent forms for all parents of children who may be captured on video during the pilot process and opt-out consent forms for all early childhood practitioners in the same situation (attached) (Wiles et al, 2004). If any practitioners, children or parents of children who may be captured on camera are not content with the situation, I will try to arrange for recording to take place when they are not present. If this is not possible, no video recording will take place and any observations conducted will be handwritten, not video recorded.

1.7. If any payment or incentive will be made to any participant, please explain what it is and provide the justification (no more than 300 words).

N/A

1.8. What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc.? (No more than 300 words.)

Data will be used to inform analysis and will be used in PhD thesis publications and possibly academic conference presentations. All participants and parents/carers of child participants will be made aware of this.

1.9. Will the data or findings of this research/project be made available to participants? If so, specify the form and timescale for feedback. What commitments will be made to participants regarding feedback? How will these obligations be verified? (No more than 300 words.)

The participants and the child participants' parents will have open access to the data throughout the life of the project and all participants will be actively encouraged to engage with the data throughout.

1.10. Please add here any other ethical considerations the ethics committee may need to be made aware of (no more than 300 words).

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS SHOULD BE COMPLETED ONLY IF THEY APPLY TO THIS RESEARCH. THEY MAY NOT BE APPLICABLE.

1.11. What risks or costs to the participants are entailed in involvement in the research/project? Are there any potential physical, psychological or disclosure dangers that can be anticipated? What is the possible benefit or harm to the subject or society from their participation or from the project as a whole? What procedures have been established for the care and protection of participants (e.g. insurance, medical cover) and the control of any information gained from them or about them?

N/A

1.12. Comment on any cultural, social or gender-based characteristics of the participants which have affected the design of the project or which may affect its conduct.

N/A

1.13. Identify any significant environmental impacts arising from your research/project and the measures you will take to minimise risk of impact.

N/A

    1.14. Please state any precautions being taken to protect your health and safety. Have you taken out travel and health insurance for the full period of the research? If not, why not. Have you read and acted upon FCO travel advice (website)? If acted upon, how?

> N/A

    1.15. Please state any precautions being taken to protect the health and safety of other researchers and others associated with the project (as distinct from the participants or the applicant).

> N/A

1.16. The UEA's staff and students will seek to comply with travel and research guidance provided by the British Government and the Governments (and Embassies) of host countries. This pertains to research permission, in-country ethical clearance, visas, health and safety information, and other travel advisory notices where applicable. If this research project is being undertaken outside the UK, has formal permission/a research permit been sought to conduct this research? Please describe the action you have taken and if a formal permit has not been sought please explain why this is not necessary/appropriate (for very short studies it is not always appropriate to apply for formal clearance, for example).

N/A

    1.17. Are there any procedures in place for external monitoring of the research, for instance by a funding agency?

N/A

Reference List

For evidence of research involving static cameras filming young children, see:

- Keyes. C. R. (2006) A Look at Children's Adjustment to Early Childhood Programs, in *Early Childhood Research and Practice*, Volume 8, No. 2
- Loizou, E. (2007) Humor as a means of regulating one's social self: two infants with unique humorous personas in *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 177:2, 195-205
- Riordan, K. & Marshall, E. (2008) 'Using videotaped Interactions to Promote Reflective Practice in Early Childhood Teachers: An Undergraduate Research Opportunity Project', Online Article @URLwww.nssa.us/journals/2008-31-1/2008-31-1-17.htm (Accessed 18.2.14)
- White, E. J. (2009) 'Assessment in New Zealand Early Childhood Education: A Bakhtinian Analysis of Toddler Metaphoricity', unpublished thesis available @URL *arrow.monash.edu.au/vital/access/%20/services/Download/.../THESIS01*, (Accessed 18.02.14)

For evidence of research involving children wearing head cameras, see:

- Adolph, K. E., Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Ishak, S., Karasik, L. B., & Lobo, S. A. (2008). Locomotor experience and use of social information are posture specific. Developmental Psychology, 44(6), 1705
- Aslin, R. N. (2008). Headed in the right direction: A commentary on Yoshida and Smith. Infancy, 13(3), 275 -278
- Aslin, R. (2009) 'How Infants View Natural Scenes Gathered from a Head-Mounted Camera', in *National Institutes of Health* @URL http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2748119/ (Accessed 18.2.14).
- Aslin, R. N. (2012). Infant eyes: A window on cognitive development. Infancy, 17(1), 126-140
- Clearfield, M. W. (2011). Learning to walk changes infants' social interactions. Infant Behavior and Development, 34(1), 15-25
- Frank, M. C., Vul, E., &Saxe, R. (2012). Measuring the development of social attention using free viewing. Infancy, 17(4), 355-375
- Murray, K., Lillakas, L., Weber, R., Moore, S., & Irving, E. (2007). Development of head movement propensity in 4– 15 year old children in response to visual step stimuli. Experimental Brain Research, 177(1), 15-20
- White, E. J. (2009) 'Assessment in New Zealand Early Childhood Education: A Bakhtinian Analysis of Toddler Metaphoricity', unpublished thesis available @URL *arrow.monash.edu.au/vital/access/%20/services/Download/.../THESIS01*, (Accessed 18.02.14)

For evidence of research involving adults wearing head-mounted cameras in a nursery context, see:

- Aslin, R. (2009) 'How Infants View Natural Scenes Gathered from a Head-Mounted Camera', in *National Institutes of Health* @URL http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2748119/ (Accessed 18.2.14).
- Darbyshire, P., MacDougall, C, & Schiller, W. (2005) 'Multiple methods in qualitative research with children: more insight or just more?' in *Qualitative Research*, Issue 5, 417-436
- Pereira, A., Yu, C., Smith, L.B. and Shen, H. (no date) A First Person Perspective on a Parent-Child Social Interaction During Object Play, online article@URLhttp://www.indiana.edu/~dll/papers/Pereira_Yu_Smith_Shen_cogsci09.pdf (Accessed 18.2.14).
- Yoshida, H. & Smith, L.B. (2008) What's in View for Toddlers? Using a Head Camera to Study Visual Experience.
- White, E. J. (2009) 'Assessment in New Zealand Early Childhood Education: A Bakhtinian Analysis of Toddler Metaphoricity', unpublished thesis available @URL *arrow.monash.edu.au/vital/access/%20/services/Download/.../THESIS01*, (Accessed 18.02.14)

For evidence of participants watching video footage of themselves for research purposes, see:

- Dockett S, Perry B. 2005. Researching with children: insights from the Starting School Research Project.Early Child Development and Care175: 507–521. DOI: 10.1080/03004430500131312

For evidence to support the notion of the children's 'Key Person' being someone they are comfortable with and can trust, see:

- Elfer, P., Goldschmied, E. & Sellek, D. (2005) Key Persons in the Nursery: Building Relationships for Quality Provision: Routledge

For evidence of interviews being video recorded, see:

- King, N. & Horrocks, C. (2010) Interviews in Qualitative Research: Sage
- White, E. J. (2009) 'Assessment in New Zealand Early Childhood Education: A Bakhtinian Analysis of Toddler Metaphoricity', unpublished thesis available @URL *arrow.monash.edu.au/vital/access/%20/services/Download/.../THESIS01*, (Accessed 18.02.14)

For evidence of a dialogic approach and literature about dialogism, see:

- Bakhtin, M. (1984) Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,London: University of Minnesota Press

- Helin, J. (2013) Dialogic Listening: toward an embodied understanding of how to "go on" during fieldwork

- Kotsopoulos, D. (2010) 'Dialogic Inquiry' in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, online article @URL http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/encyc-of-case-study-research/n112.xml. Accessed 18.1.14

- Sullivan, P. (2012) Qualitative Data Analysis Using a Dialogical Approach, London: Sage

- White, E. J. (2009) 'Assessment in New Zealand Early Childhood Education: A Bakhtinian Analysis of Toddler Metaphoricity', unpublished thesis available @URL *arrow.monash.edu.au/vital/access/%20/services/Download/.../THESIS01*, (Accessed 18.02.14)

- United Nations (1989) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Geneva, United Nations

For evidence of methods of gaining parental consent, see:

- Wiles, R., Charles, V., Crow, G., Heath, S. (2004) 'Informed Consent and the Research Process' (Paper Presented at the ESRC Research Methods Festival in 2004), Online Article @URL ccsr.ac.uk/methods/publications/WilesPaper_000.doc. (Accessed 18.2.14)

For evidence of methods of gaining children's consent, see:

- Skånfors, L. (2009) Ethics in Child Research: Children's Agency and Researchers' 'Ethical Radar', 'Childhoods Today' 3 (1) @ URL> www.childhoodstoday.org/article.php?id=40 Accessed 17.10.14

For evidence of biographic encounters being used in a duoethnographic approach, see:

- Sawyer, R. D. & Norris, J (2012) Duoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research, Oxford: OUP

5. DECLARATION:

Please complete the following boxes with YES, NO, or NOT APPLICABLE:

I have read (and discussed with my supervisor if student) the University's Research Ethics Policy, Principle and Procedures, and consulted the British Educational Research Association's Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research and other available documentation on the EDU Research Ethics webpage and, when appropriate, the BACP Guidelines for Research Ethics.	YES
I am aware of the relevant sections of the Data Protection Act (1998): http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980029.htm and Freedom of Information Act (2005).	YES
Data gathering activities involving schools and other organizations will be carried out only with the agreement of the head of school/organization, or an authorised representative, and after adequate notice has been given.	YES
The purpose and procedures of the research, and the potential benefits and costs of participating (e.g. the amount of their time involved), will be fully explained to prospective research participants at the outset.	YES
My full identity will be revealed to potential participants.	YES
Prospective participants will be informed that data collected will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be reported in anonymised form	YES
All potential participants will be asked to give their explicit, written consent to participating in the research, and, where consent is given, separate copies of this will be retained by both researcher and participant.	YES
In addition to the consent of the individuals concerned, the signed consent of a parent/carer will be required to sanction the participation of minors (i.e. persons under 16 years of age).	YES
Undue pressure will not be placed on individuals or institutions to participate in research activities.	YES
The treatment of potential research participants will in no way be prejudiced if they choose not to participate in the project.	YES
I will provide participants with my UEA contact details (*not* my personal contact details) and those of my supervisor, in order that they are able to make contact in relation to any aspect of the research, should they wish to do so. I will notify participants that complaints can be made to the Head of School.	YES
Participants will be made aware that they may freely withdraw from the project at any time without risk or prejudice.	YES
Research will be carried out with regard for mutually convenient times and negotiated in a way that seeks to minimise disruption to schedules and burdens on participants	YES
At all times during the conduct of the research I will behave in an appropriate, professional manner and take steps to ensure that neither myself nor research participants are placed at risk.	YES
The dignity and interests of research participants will be respected at all times, and steps will be taken to ensure that no harm will result from participating in the research	YES
The views of all participants in the research will be respected.	YES

Special efforts will be made to be sensitive to differences relating to age, culture, disability, race, sex, religion and sexual orientation, amongst research participants, when planning, conducting and reporting on the research.	YES
Data generated by the research (e.g. transcripts of research interviews) will be kept in a safe and secure location and will be used purely for the purposes of the research project (including dissemination of findings). No-one other than research colleagues, professional transcribers and supervisors will have access to any identifiable raw data collected, unless written permission has been explicitly given by the identified research participant.	YES
Research participants will have the right of access to any data pertaining to them.	YES
All necessary steps will be taken to protect the privacy and ensure the anonymity and non-traceability of participants – e.g. by the use of pseudonyms, for both individual and institutional participants, in any written reports of the research and other forms of dissemination.	YES

I am satisfied that all ethical issues have been identified and that satisfactory procedures are in place to deal with those issues in this research project. I will abide by the procedures described in this form.

Name of Applicant:	Laura Tallant
Date:	22.01.2014

PGR Supervisor declaration (for PGR student research only)

I have discussed the ethics of the proposed research with the student and am satisfied that all ethical issues have been identified and that satisfactory procedures are in place to deal with those issues in this research project.

Name of PGR Supervisor:	Professor Victoria Carrington
Date:	08.01.2014

6. ATTACHMENTS:

The following should be attached to your application as necessary – please indicate if attached and list any additional materials:

* Project Information Sheet (for participants)
* Participant Consent Form(s)
* Other Supporting Documents

EDU ETHICS COMMITTEE 2013/1

Appendix 3

Example of Key Moment selection process:
Head Cam Clip Database

Head Cam	Time (With lead up and lead down (restoration?))	People involved	Event	Indication of humour	Cross Reference
1. Elsa (Obs 1a)	1.50ish	Ed	Sand tray, laughing	Laughter	
2. Elsa (Obs 1a)	3.28ish	Harry, Pedro, Leo, Sam	Computer, dancing, laughing	Laughter	
3. Elsa (Obs 1a)	6.20ish	Sabina	'I've been looking in the mirror' smiling	Smiling	
3. Elsa (Obs 1a)	8.30ish	Harry, Leo, Pedro	'Scary baby' laughing	Laughter	
4. Elsa (Obs 1b)	3.00ish	Chloe, Zoe	Egg, beans and sausages	Laughter	
5. Elsa (Obs 1b)	4.50ish	Zoe, Chloe (then James)	Maman	Laughter	
6. Elsa (Obs 1b)	5.28ish	Zoe, Chloe and James	'It's working again' and 'how did she get up there?'	Laughter	
7. Elsa (Obs 1b)	6.18ish	James, Zoe and Chloe, Madi, Sam	Juicy James	Laughter	
8. Elsa (Obs 1b)	8.50ish	James	Rapunzel let down your hair	Smiling and laughter	
9. Elsa (Obs 1b carried over into 1c)	10.03ish	James, Chloe	My headband went on my nose	Smiling and laughter	
10. Elsa (Obs 1c)	2.10ish	James	Because he poos	Laughter	
11. Pedro (Obs 1a)	7.00ish	Leo, Dhruva	Sandcastles and Bears	Smiling, some quiet laughter	
`12. Nathanial (Obs 1a)	1.00ish	Gerda	I've got two?	Laughter	
13. Nathanial (Obs 1a)	3.00 ish	Pedro	Round and round	Laughter	

14. Nathanial (Obs 1a)	5.50ish	Pedro, Elsa (look up 4.50ish)	Man on the moon nah nah nah	Laughter	
15. Aled (Obs 1b)	3.20ish	Ana	Oh no, it's going backwards!	Laughter	
16. Aled (Obs 1b)	6.10ish	Ethan, Leo, Pedro	Sandcastles and Bears (I don't want any bears to come out…)		11
17. Aled (Obs 1b)	8.50ish	Ethan, Pedro, Leo	A lovely pattern…he's making into blocks	Laughter	
18. Nathanial (Obs 1a)	9.05ish	Pedro (Pedro's comment but did not catch it on his head camera), Elsa, Madi,	Madi chair, Ethan chair!		
Nathanial (Obs 1a)	9.20ish	Pedro, Laura	O, oh!	Smiling and quiet laughter	
Sebastian (Obs 1a)	0.20	Gerda	Look, look!	Smiling, quiet laughter	
Sebastian (Obs 1a)	8.10ish	Elsa	It's working again and How did she get up there?	Smiling	6
Sebastian (Obs 1a going into 1b)	9.10ish	Elsa, Sabina, Sam, Madi, Zoe	Juicy James, Sammy Snake, Marvellous Madi and Zippy Zoe	Laughing	7
Sebastian Obs 1b	2.16ish	Elsa, Laura	Your sponge has popped out!	Laughing	

Example of the head camera band and head camera used in the study:

Appendix 5

**Example of the polyphonic video screen with 2 different perspectives of the same event (taken from individual head cameras).**

Appendix 6

Fieldwork timetables

Pilot Study Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	-Arrive 8am. Set up static cameras within the room. -Arrange where the interviews will take place. -Go over the schedule with the practitioner participants (PPs). -Give PPs research journals. -Ask PPs to practice wearing the head-cam.	Edit Footage into clips. Load onto ipad. **Away from nursery** (unless Monday was unsuccessful and Tuesday is needed to gather data...).	-Interview with PP A (watch video clips and discuss) – video record interview. -Interview with PP B (watch video clips and discuss) – video record interview.	-Secondary Interview with PP A -watch footage of first interview and discuss. -Secondary Interview with Practitioner B – watch interview of first video and discuss.	Transcribe interviews and send to them to PPs for member checking.
Afternoon	-Record for one half hour with PP A wearing the head-cam (lunch-time?). -Record for one half hour with PP B wearing the head-cam.		-Interview with child participants (together) – video record interview.	-Secondary Interviews with child participants (together) – watch video of first interview. -Collect research journals.	

Children's Humour Research Schedule

WEEK 1 *(Italics = flexible day and suggestions)*

Time	Mon 24th Nov	Tues 25th Nov	Weds 26th Nov	Thurs 27th Nov	Fri 27th Nov
8.15	LT to arrive		LT video editing all day	LT to arrive	LT to arrive
8.30	Interviews x 2 PRs	LT to arrive (set up cameras and decide their exact location)		Dialogic Encounter 1 with PRs x2 (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with PRs x2 (PRs to watch video of Dialogic Encounter 1 - filmed but only for transcription purposes)
9					
9.30					
10		Preparation for filming. Place necessary signs on doors (no entry, filming in progress; no entry to one of the bathrooms), place head band box at the door of the bathroom being used (talk to CRs about cameras; fit the cameras to the head bands and switch on; explain that if the CRs want to take off the head band to come and		Dialogic Encounter 1 with CRs in main room (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with CRs in main room (CRs to watch video of Dialogic Encounter 1 - filmed but only for transcription purposes)

Children's Humour Research Schedule

WEEK 1 *[italics = flexible day and suggestions]*

Time	Mon 24th Nov	Tues 25th Nov	Weds 26th Nov	Thurs 27th Nov	Fri 27th Nov
8.15	LT to arrive		LT video editing all day		LT to arrive
8.30	Interviews x 2 PRs	LT to arrive (set up cameras and decide their exact location)		LT to arrive Dialogic Encounter 1 with PRs x2 (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with PRs x2 (PRs to watch video of Dialogic Encounter 1 - filmed but only for transcription purposes)
9					
9.30					
10		Preparation for filming. Place necessary signs on doors (no entry, filming in progress; no entry to one of the bathrooms), place head band box at the door of the bathroom being used (talk to CRs about cameras; fit the cameras to the head bands and switch on; explain that if the CRs want to take off the head band to come and see an adult who will help them put the camera on as a badge) Filming with PRs, CRs and LT.		Dialogic Encounter 1 with CRs in main room (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with CRs in main room (CRs to watch video of Dialogic Encounter 1 - filmed but only for transcription purposes)
10.30		Filming with PRs CRs and LT.			
11			LT to bring DVD of the film to PRs to enable them to view the DVD before Dialogic Encounter 1. LT also to provide PRs with a prompt sheet to aid analysis of the video.		
11.30					
12		LT video editing			
12.30					
1					
1.30					
2					
2.30					
3					
3.30					
4.30					
5	Interview x 2 PRs			Dialogic Encounter 1 with PRs x2 (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with PRs x2
5.30					

Children's Humour Research Schedule

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Children's Humour Research Schedule

WEEK 2

Time	Mon 1st Dec	Tues 2nd Dec	Weds 3rd Dec	Thurs 4th Dec	Fri 5th Dec
8.15	LT to arrive (set up cameras)	LT to arrive (set up cameras)	LT video editing all day (if filming occurs on Monday this could take place on Tuesday instead)	LT to arrive (if filming occurs on Monday these activities could take place on Wednesday)	LT to arrive (if filming occurs on Monday these activities could take place on Thursday)
8.30				Dialogic Encounter 1 with PRs x2 (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with PRs x2 (PRs to watch video of Dialogic Encounter 1 - filmed but only for transcription purposes)
9					
9.30					
10	Preparation for filming. Place necessary signs on doors (no entry, filming in progress, no entry in out of the bathrooms), place head band box at the door of the bathroom being used (talk to CRs about cameras, fit the cameras to the head bands and switch on, explain	Preparation for filming. Place necessary signs on doors (no entry, filming in progress, no entry to one of the bathrooms), place head band box at the door of the bathroom being used (talk to CRs about cameras, fit the cameras to the head bands and switch on, explain		Dialogic Encounter 1 with CRs in main room (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with CRs in main room (CRs to watch video of Dialogic Encounter 1 - filmed but only for transcription purposes)

Children's Humour Research Schedule

Time	Mon 1st Dec	Tues 2nd Dec	Weds 3rd Dec	Thurs 4th Dec	Fri 5th Dec
	then if the CRs want to take off the head band to relax and see an adult who will help them put the camera on as a badge). Filming with PRs, CRs and LT.	then if the CRs want to take off the head band to relax and see an adult who will help them put the camera on as a badge). Filming with PRs, CRs and LT.			
10.30	Filming with PRs CRs and LT.	Filming with PRs CRs and LT.	LT to bring DVD of the film to PRs to enable them to view the DVD before Dialogic Encounter 1. LT also to provide PRs with a prompt sheet to aid analysis of the video.		
11					
11.30					
12	LT video editing	LT video editing			
12.30					
1					
1.30					
2					
2.30					
3					
3.30					
4.30					
5					Dialogic Encounter 1 with PRs x2 (filmed)	Dialogic Encounter 2 with PRs x2
5.30					
12					
12.30					
1					
1.30					

Children's Humour Research Schedule

2			
2.30			
3			
3.30			
4.30			
5		Dialogic Encounter 1 with PRs x2	Dialogic Encounter 2 with PRs x2
5.30			

PR = Practitioner Researcher; CR = Child Researcher; LT = Laura Tallant