'Moving Sites': Transformation and Re-location in Site-specific Dance Performance

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This article explores the concepts of mobility, transformation and re-location in relation to site-specific dance performance. Processes and practices of mobility are explored through a consideration of the triadic relationship between performer, audience and site encountered within the author's site-specific dance work *The Library Dances* (2006). Through the discussion of a creative process, the article explores how the mobile, experiential interplay between performer, audience and site aimed to explore and challenge notions of 'located-ness', fixity and 'place identity'.

'We are here... Here we are... Here is where?.... Where are we?'[1]

The Library Dances project began with a questioning of my motivations and experiences as an audience member attending site-specific performance events. What intrigues me is the promise of the unknown and the revelation of new-found realities in familiar/un-familiar places. This process, in effect mobilises my perceptions of the site, its location and identity and my own 'position' within the performance-site world. In this sense, the site is metaphorically freed from its everyday, normative meanings and associations and its identity becomes mobilized through

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[1] Soundscore excerpt *The Library Dances*, 2006.

the individual's processes of experiencing and perceiving the site in a different manner. The site-specific event therefore holds the potential to both locate and *re-locate* the individual, drawing their attention to the site whilst simultaneously challenging pre-conceived notions of the site as the real world is shifted momentarily 'out of focus'. The creative potential afforded to the individual within this moment of shift and its ability to problematise notions of located-ness formed the basis for *The Library Dances* project. The performance was created and performed in Leeds Central Library in September 2006[2], performed by five dancers, the work engaged eight audience members at a time in a promenade journey through the site where they encountered performance in key locations. The library building dates back to 1883; it is centrally located and represents a prominent architectural feature in the city of Leeds. It houses a range of books and reference materials over four floors and is a very open site, holding regular workshops and classes, art exhibitions, talks and reading groups. As such, the library attracts a wide range of users, staff and visitors all of whom experience and interact with the site in a variety of ways.

A conceptual framework informed by environmental psychology [3], phenomenology[4] and human geography[5] helped to shape the creative process. This conceptual and theoretical material enabled me to expand my thinking as a choreographer engaging with space and place; it facilitated the development of a creative process that aimed to challenge the audience to experience the site anew. This paper shares a particular creative process and illustrates how this process developed,

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[2] The work was co-funded by the Arts Council and the University of Leeds and involved a creative team comprising myself as choreographer/director and a team of locally based practitioners including Ronan McNern (lighting design/technical manager), Adam Longbottom (composer), Oliver Mallett (creative writer), Lindsay Davies (designer), and Nicola Greenan (project manager).

[3] Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe K. Fabian, Robert Kamino, 'Place-identity : Physical world socialization of the self', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 3 (1983).

[4] Sondra Fraleigh, *Dance and The Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception,* (London: Routledge, 1962).

[5] Doreen Massey, *For Space,* (London: Sage Publishing, 2005).

informed by a complex range of theoretical notions that stress a multi-faceted approach to engaging with space and place both as mobile, fluid concepts.

I apply the term mobility here to a personal practice comprising an individualised movement process; I consider mobility in relation to the highly stylised, honed mobility of the dancer/performer and in relation to the more functional, attentive mobility and journeying 'performed' by the audience member. Ong Keng Sen explores the prodigious and liberating[6] effects of mobility, describing it as 'an ideal space where imaginations can take flight'; he adds that 'mobility agitates any system', eradicating apathy and forcing the traveller to attend to and take stock of new surroundings and experiences. Drawing on this argument, I am not concerned with 'meta-mobilities' of travel and distance, but instead individualised 'micro-mobilities' and personal 'journeys' consisting of subjective perceptions and experiences encountered within the site-specific performance event. I place the practices of mobility encountered within the project on a progressive continuum comprising; the dancers' mobility (exploring new pathways through the site and new ways of moving in and around it); the audiences' mobility (following the performers' journeys and actions, moving through the site and performance); and a 'mobility' of the site itself, as its fixity becomes destabilised by the performance event through the revelation of multiple readings.

Peter Adey observes that 'mobilities almost always involve a kind of transformation of the contexts and spaces they occur through'. In this sense, through the creation of a 'mobile' performance intervention presented within a real-world location, *The Library Dances* challenged

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[6] Ong Ken Sen, 'Desiring Mobility', *Performance Research,* 12, vol. 2 (2007).

conventional[7] notions of the fixed and stable. Through our physical, lived experience of a particular type of mobility encountered through site-specific dance performance, it may be possible to experience a perceptual shift in our experiencing of space and place. To illustrate the engineering of this process, the discussion of *The Library Dances* follows a chronological format addressing key themes and concepts explored throughout the practical investigation: Location and Identity, Transformation, Getting Lost and Re-location.

Location and Identity

Topographic systems locate us in the world through the processes of mapping, charting and tracking our whereabouts; an individual's location becomes pin-pointed, identified and fixed so that we are located in a particular place at a particular time. Our sense of located-ness becomes defined by a degree of certainty that we are 'here.' We know that a particular location is here because, in addition to our physical presence in a particular place, we can locate ourselves on a map, register a grid location and direct ourselves towards and within it. In a conventional sense, 'located-ness', to be *in* place implies a degree of fixity, rooted-ness and assuredness. Site-specific performance troubles this understanding through the transformation of everyday places into places of performance.

Proshansky et al discuss 'place-identity' as a 'cognitive sub-structure of self-identity'[8] involving both a conscious and sub-conscious experience of place. The concept explores how notions of

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[7] Peter Adey, *Mobility*, (London: Routledge, 2010), p.12.

[8] Proshansky, Fabian, and Kamino, 'Place-identity', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 3 (1983), pp.61 - 68.

stability and implied permanence associated with place and location provide an individual with 'affirmation of the belief that the properties of his or her day-to-day physical world are unchanging', a position which, over time 'gives credence to and support for his or her self identity'. Comprising 'a pot-pourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas and related feelings about specific physical settings as well as types of settings', place-identity engages the whole self in the experiencing of and identification with places and location. This process and its subsequent production of self-identity is situated within a wider, culturally-determined framework. Buildings, places and locations become inscribed with meaning for the individual informed by a multitude of culturally determined codes and conventions pertaining not only to the identity of a place but to the rules of behaviour and engagement experienced and enacted there. Pierre Bourdieu identifies the enactment of this system as 'habitus' pertaining to 'a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles that generate and organise practices'. Through their[9] enactment, these culturally determined 'dispositions' and associated behaviours reinforce a society's norms, codes and conventions in a cyclical fashion, helping us to situate ourselves in the world and identify our role within it: 'habitus is thus a sense of one's (and others') place and role in the world and of one's lived environment…..habitus is an embodied, as well as a cognitive sense of place'[10]. *The Library Dances* challenged this aspect of the acquired habitus by exploring the nexus of interaction between the cognitive and embodied sense of place as experienced by the project's creative collaborators. The performance disrupted the conventional 'narratives of use'

[9] Pierre Bourdieu, in Jean Hiller, and Emma Rooksby, (eds.), *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, (London: Ashgate Press, 2005) p.53.

[10] Jean Hiller, and Emma Rooksby, (eds.), *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, (London: Ashgate Press, 2005) p.21.

habitually enacted within libraries to encourage individual audience members to consider new ways of engaging with the site.

In order to acknowledge and draw upon the library's 'shared ownership' by the general public, site-users were provided with the opportunity to contribute towards the development of the creative process though the completion of pre-production questionnaires which invited individuals to reflect upon their experiences and associations with and responses to the site in order to inform and enrich the creative process. Common themes began to emerge regarding the site users' perceptions of and associations with the library. Many responses explored an embodied sense of place and described the site as a place of refuge. For many users, this appeared to be associated with a sense of escapism commonly associated with libraries.[11] One participant explained, 'I feel as if time has stopped in here', whilst another response described how 'this place allows you the freedom to chase your own knowledge and dreams'. This sense of pursuing knowledge was shared by other users and appeared for many to equate to a process of empowerment; one response offers that 'The library represents a gateway to other things – knowledge, freedom'. For others, the historic nature of the building appeared to invoke a process of reminiscence pertaining to their own past and personal histories: 'It [the library] invokes lots of good memories, of book and childhood.'[12]

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[11] See:
Craig Hartman, 'Memory Palace, Place of Refuge, Coney Island of the Mind'. *Research Strategies*, 17 (2000).
Michael Cart, 'Here there be Sanctuary; the Public Library as Refuge and Retreat', *Public Library Quarterly,* 12, (1992).
Helen Ligget, 'City sights/Sites of Memories and Dreams,' in Ligget, H. and Perry, D. (eds). *Spatial Practices*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) pp. 243-272.
[12] Extracts from audience questionnaire, *The Library Dances* project, September 2006. Audience questionnaires were completed after each performance and were completed by all audience members enabling them to provide feedback regarding their experiences and feelings encountered during the performance event. Extracts included in this article were taken from six questionnaire responses.

Towards the end of the questionnaires, the site users were invited to complete a free-writing

exercise placing themselves in a favourite location within the library to record their thoughts,

feelings and responses in the moment of experiencing. One such response is described here:

> A journey around the world, universe, anywhere, you just have it.
>
> Whatever you feel like reading.
>
> Peaceful, the world at our fingertips.
>
> The books are the tools. They make me feel powerful.[13]

The responses to the writing task were (in some instances) the most interesting and intriguing as

individuals attempted to articulate their personal relationship with the site in all its intricate

complexity. These responses provided an insight into numerous versions of the site as seen,

perceived and experienced subjectively. In this sense, each response to the writing task provided

a snapshot of the individual's 'site-reality,'[14] an impression of how the site phenomenon appeared

to them through their lived-experience. Through this process, a range of creative themes or

'strands' began to emerge as stimuli for further exploration; these themes included notions of

time and timelessness, perspective, inside/outside dichotomies, and playing with physical and

conceptual boundaries.

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[13] Extracts from audience questionnaire, *The Library Dances* project, September 2006.

[14] The term 'site-reality' was developed throughout the devising process to describe the individual's immediate lived-experience of the site. The concept of the 'lived experience' in dance draws upon phenomenological philosophy and focuses on perceiving and experiencing the world in a pre-reflective manner, responding in the moment through the lived experience of the body. See Fraleigh, *Dance and The Lived Body,* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987).

In addition to the gathering of site-user responses, my own process of site exploration began to develop both physically and experientially, firstly, through an analysis of my phenomenological process of 'being' in the site and secondly, through an exploration of the site's architectural features and history. Through these excavations, we unearthed the past life of the site as a museum, public offices and C.I.D headquarters. It became apparent from reading the site-users' responses that few had any notion of this past life or any knowledge of the site beyond their immediate experiencing. Additionally, it became clear that the site as experienced differed between users, between employees and between the regular and irregular visitors. The responses revealed a multiplicity of site realities, meanings, uses and associations connected with the library, all of which combined to create an impression of a site that evaded categorization and demarcation. The site as a 'given', as known, as a definable entity became subject to a process of slippage when inconsistencies in its public and private (determined by the individual) identities began to emerge. Through this process, the potential mobility of the site also began to emerge; if the site was no longer what it had first seemed, then where is 'here' and what are the associated implications for the construction of a subjective place-identity?

This process revealed that the site users were engaged with a number of individually perceived sites existing within one physical location at a particular time. The physical site remained situated in its geographical position; through the individual's lived experience, however, the site also became located in and defined at the nexus of interaction between individual and site. Doreen Massey's theories in which she considers space and place both as fluid and indeterminate entities influenced my creative development of the work at this stage. Massey's discussion

of spaces and places containing a multitude of 'coeval trajectories' led me to explore[15], both

choreographically and conceptually, the co-existence yet separateness of these sole-authored

perceptions of the site. This led to the formulation of a creative process that focussed on revealing

and celebrating the co-existence of site realities in order to explore notions of location, located-

ness and place-identity[16].

Transformation

To facilitate the exploration of these notions, the emerging work formulated a series of

performance installations, often referred to as 'episodes' or 'encounters' during the devising

process. Each episode aimed to create a subtle disruption of and interruption to the everyday

place-world of the library site and the associated habitus to encourage audience members to re-

assess their surroundings and experience them in an extra-daily manner. Seven key locations

within the library building were selected as micro-sites for dance performance installations;

moving from the ground floor upwards, these performance encounters were visited in sequence

by eight audience members at a time[17] (see Figure 1). The performance soundtrack, which

comprised original composition, devised, and found sound, accompanied these moments and

provided the audience with verbal information (a combination of fact and fiction) regarding the

library as they moved between performance episodes. The conceit of the guided tour served three

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[15] Massey. *For Space*. (London: Sage Publishing, 2005) p.114.

[16] This concern for exploring 'co-existence' can also be evidenced in Shobana Jeyasingh's site-specific dance work [h]Interland (2002) performed in the Borough Hall, Greenwich. This work explored issues of specificity and simultaneity across time and space through the exploration of 'different presences overlapping in the same arena' Sanjoy Roy, (2002) www.rescen.net/Shobana-Jeyasingh/hinterland [accessed 5 November 2009].

[17] The performances were held over a three-day period, occurring twice daily, they were publicised locally and were open to the general public.

functions: firstly it helped navigate the audience around the site in a safe and comfortable manner. Secondly the format facilitated the questioning of location and located-ness in a simple manner through the auditory juxtaposition of sound accompaniment and narrative that comprised a combination of truths, untruths, and questions. Thirdly, the use of headsets as a transformative device allowed the individual audience members to experience the library in a new way, accompanied by a soundtrack.

Fig. 1: Cross-section plan of the Leeds Central Library building (not to scale).

The performance 'episode' locations were selected for their potential to facilitate an exploration or explication of the work's themes resulting from the location's architectural make-up or through the nature of the 'thematic' content provided by the library material housed within the particular corridor, room or landing. For example, the *Country Life* corridor (location 4) housed a collection of the magazine's back copies; many of the leather-bound volumes lined the corridor's floor-to-ceiling shelving. The apparent incongruity of attempts to house and contain 'country life' in such a bound and ordered manner within an urban location provided the inspiration for a series of improvisation tasks which explored notions of inside/outside, bound/free dichotomies in relation to the symbolic 'capturing' and 'ordering' of the countryside encapsulated within the corridor location. The resulting performance episode featured the five dancers moving through the corridor performing individual phrases which explored their abstract responses to notions of 'nature' and countryside imagery; their fluid, languid movement combined with tasks which engaged them in a more dynamic and literal 'search' through the archived material as they

effectively sought to reveal the 'country life' contained within the walls of the building and reveal to the audience the paradox within.

Informed by the site-users' questionnaire responses, the generation of movement material followed a devised approach that meant exploring the site through two related yet distinct processes identified here as the processes of *amplification* and *abstraction*. Amplification tasks, for example, required myself and the dancers, to observe and respond to the site's formal, visual, functional, and architectural features. The movement content resulting from this type of exploration might include motifs, gestures and phrases representing the architectural lines, dimensions and forms of the site. These tasks required the dancers to improvise and respond to the site as seen and to produce material that drew attention to its form and function and the human behaviours existing within it. Through these tasks, movement material was produced which amplified and developed those behaviours, drawing attention to often overlooked formal and architectural features. Abstraction tasks required the dancers to immerse themselves within the experiential, phenomenological world of the library site in order to respond corporeally to the lived-experience of the site and in so doing give form to those experiences through the creation of abstract movement material. Informed by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach[18] prioritising the lived-body as the primary source of engaging with the world, these tasks were facilitated through a process of phenomenological reduction. Described by Mickunas and Stewart as 'a narrowing of attention to what is essential in the problem while disregarding the superfluous and accidental', this approach enabled a direct through-line of connectivity to develop between[19]

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[18] Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*. (London: Routledge, 1962).

[19] Quoted in Fraleigh, *Dance and The Lived Body.* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987) p.6.

site and performer. This description of an abstraction task for *The Library Dances* articulates the

phenomenological approach taken by the performers as a means of exploring the site

experientially:

> We began by simply 'being' in the space, taking the time to explore the site and
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> surroundings with the senses – what is contained within the site?
>
> The dancers took up a space of their choosing in the site and closed their eyes – this
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> closed the need to constantly seek the visual element and really attune to the felt
>
> experience of the site.
>
> We began a breathing exercise on the spot and began to sway. We let the sway be
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> informed by the pull of the door – this became the inroad to inform the pattern and
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> dynamic of the movement material.[20]

From this phenomenological movement task, a simple improvised sequence developed involving

the dancers' journey through the corridor, walking, turning, pausing and swaying; this was

combined with movement responses and reactions to the presence and movement of the audience

members during the moment of performance. This type of performance episode aimed to provide

the audience with another form of experiencing the site by entering into a phenomenological

exchange with the performer, positioning them in a perceptively active and viscerally 'mobile'

role as described by Fraleigh : 'I dance the dance with the dancer, enact it, dissolve it, and take it

into myself. In this sense I also embody the dance'. Opportunities for individuals to[21] become

immersed and engaged in the performance event were thus created through the construction of

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[20] Louise McDowall, assistant choreographer (unpublished journal entry) *The Library Dances* Project, September 2006.
[21] Fraleigh, *Dance and The Lived Body.* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987) p.62.

episodes in which both performer and audience member were encouraged to enter into a

phenomenological, corporeal 'exchange' with each other and the site phenomenon.

Getting Lost

Franco La Cecla discusses various forms and degrees of getting lost as a condition of human

kind's negotiation with and interaction with the physical and cultural environment:

> It can happen on the freeway, in a city that we do not know or even on the way home. It is
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> a frustrating, embarrassing and at the same time ridiculous experience. We are put in a
>
> position of being displaced, misplaced. It shows an ambiguous, vaguely defined, confused
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> relationship with the environment in which we get lost. We suddenly find ourselves
>
> without sense of direction, without reference points.
>
> We are 'here', but 'here' doesn't correspond to a 'where' we would like to be.[22]

This passage encapsulates the type of 'getting lost' which *The Library Dances* aimed to invoke

and chimes with my experience of living and working in Leeds, a city which has undergone

significant modernisation and re-development in recent years: a familiar city often alien and

unfathomable produces moments of disorientation equivalent La Cecla's description of getting

lost as a form of 'immersion into the unknown'. The performance soundtrack and oral narrative

frequently referred to processes of modernisation and cityscape reconfiguration surrounding the

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[22] Franco La Cecla, 'Getting Lost and the Localized Mind' in Alan Read, *Architecturally Speaking: Practices of Art, Architecture and the Everyday*, (London: Routledge, 2000) pp 31-49, p.31.

centrally-located site; it included references to Leeds's commercial past and contemporary development, reminding the audience of the site's wider context and the simultaneity of city life surrounding the Library. The type of immersive experience offered to the audience member in *The Library Dances* did not seek to alarm or alienate them, but instead invoked a gentle sense of estrangement through a combination of three key elements: firstly through the overlapping and layering of performance themes and concepts; secondly through the direct choreographing of the audience experience; and thirdly through the use of a naturalistic and 'direct' style of performance adopted by the dancers. To illustrate this point, I provide a description of one section of the work, performed within the Library's business library on the third floor.

Four dancers dressed in white sit at a long wooden table alternating between looking at the audience and looking around the site. Some site users glance at the audience members and the dancers, others immersed in their work remain oblivious to the event unfolding around them. Slowly, the dancer at the far end of the table reaches down to a box on the floor and places a small white box on the table. As she observes the box and moves it around, it is revealed to be a small model of a building, or part of a building.

The box is passed on down the line of dancers at the table, more boxes are slowly unpacked and revealed. The buildings vary in size and shape, some are recognizable as local architectural landmarks, others remain anonymous.
The fifth dancer on the far balcony above travels slowly across the balcony performing gentle, undulating arm gestures and high-arch body actions mirroring the architecture and expansive qualities of the site's form and design.

The sound-score, which incorporated text, found sound and traffic noises collected from outside the library building itself, played with ideas of simultaneity and co-evalness inspired by Massey's notion of 'intersecting trajectories' converging in one place. This was mirrored by the dancers'[23] manipulation of the cardboard buildings as the outside world was symbolically transported inside. In addition, the audience themselves were engaged consciously and subconsciously in their own subjective exploration of co-evalness through the use of headsets which simultaneously placed them both inside and outside of the library site-world, engaged and complicit in the frame of play yet removed from other site-users.

The blurring of boundaries between performer and audience was further enhanced by the direction of the performers' gaze back to the audience as they regarded their mutual presence in the space. Furthermore, the performers' glances actively directed the audiences' gaze around the site in order to highlight certain architectural and spatial features thereby encouraging the individual to acknowledge the site detail and expansive proportions. One audience response describes how this technique increased her awareness of the site and invoked a sense of 'present-ness', 'My senses were heightened in the moment and I felt present both physically and mentally in a now that was a web of past and present events and experiences'.[24] This deliberate manipulation of perspective and gaze aimed to subtly disorientate the audience member physically and experientially. A further audience response describes how they became 'lost' within the performance world and distanced from the 'real' world outside of the library site: 'It

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[23] Massey, *For Space*. (London: Sage Publishing, 2005) p.24

[24] Extracts from audience questionnaire, *The Library Dances* project, September 2006.

made me feel very relaxed and lost in the moment. Everything from the outside world was forgotten about, it felt quite liberating'.[25]

These audience responses reveal two distinct yet interrelated types of 'getting lost' described by a number of audience members pertaining to both a conceptual and phenomenological process. Conceptually, the audience members were presented with a number of elements with which to engage on a cognitive level, all of which were intended to reveal the site in a different light and disorient and 'unfix' the individual. Phenomenologically, the audience members were presented with an opportunity to immerse themselves within a performance world through their engagement with a range of less tangible performance elements experienced subjectively. This process required a willingness on the individual's behalf to be present in the moment and to immerse themselves within the work in order to invoke a phenomenological exchange between performer and audience as discussed previously.

Re-location

What are the implications for this process of transformation? What happens to our located identity when a place becomes 'mobile', transformed by the site-specific performance event, when 'here' becomes (momentarily) somewhere else? Through this discussion of *The Library Dances* project the concept of transformation is applied to the deliberate artistic transformation of the site through performance. According to Miwon Kwon's discussion of site-specific art and locational identity, an actual place becomes a 'phantom' when the site-specific event invokes a liberating 'deterritorialization' of site:

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[25] Extracts from audience questionnaire, *The Library Dances* project, September 2006.

Displacing the strictures of place-bound identities with the fluidity of a migratory

model, introducing possibilities for the production of multiple identities,

allegiances, and meanings based not on normative conformities but on the non

rational convergences forged by chance encounters and circumstances.[26]

The final performance work, whilst comprising an artistic response to the site, could also be

considered as an 'offering up' of the site as a 'fluid', incomplete space, evading categorization or

definitive description, available for the audience to explore and construct according to their own

imaginative and subjective wanderings. Some of these explorations are described in responses

gathered from post-performance questionnaires concerning the individual's experiences and

feelings encountered during the performance event: 'I felt like a child in an old house….curious,

calm. I became nostalgic for my grand parents' old library', and 'It felt like I was witnessing a

secret, something hidden and old that was exposed and integrated with the now'.[27]

A number of these responses referred to a sense of peace and calm experienced during the

performance event; inevitably informed by the wearing of audio headsets that distanced the

audience members further from the everyday site world. Connected to this sense of calm and

tranquillity, however, appeared for some to be an associated facilitation of personal self-

reflection. A number of audience respondents refer to this, one commenting; 'I felt very calm and

peaceful, floating through experiences of history both personal and learnt'.[28] This response

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[26] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004) p.165.

[27] Extracts from audience questionnaires, *The Library Dances* project, September 2006.

[28] Extracts from audience questionnaire, *The Library Dances* project, September 2006.

describes a sense of personal reflection and 'journeying' through past memories and experiences invoked by the performance event, a self-reflection and memory invocation echoed in a number of post-performance responses. The immersion and 'getting lost' within the performance event parallels Proshansky et al's observations regarding 'dysfunctional' settings: "It is, generally speaking, only when a physical setting becomes dysfunctional that a person becomes aware of his or her expectations for that setting"[29]. Through individuals' engagement with this 'dysfunctional' site and the surreal performance world, they were challenged to be self-reflective and consider how they might act in relation to an ever-shifting world.

The concept of re-location can also be applied to the site itself as, through its own process of metaphorical 'mobility', it effectively becomes re-inscribed[30] with meaning both during and following the performance event itself, as the palimpsestic nature of the site was written-over with new meaning arising from the individual's interaction with the performance event. This process is exemplified here through responses gathered from post-performance questionnaires completed by library staff:

> I think it was the first time I had thought about the library in a personal context, rather than historical/literary.

> All the corridors which normally appear quite gloomy had life and beauty. Apart from the architecture I hadn't noticed or felt much towards the library until now.

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[29] Proshansky, Fabian, and Kamino, 'Place-identity', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 3 (1983) p.75.

[30] For a discussion of site-specific dance performance and re-inscription see Valerie Briginshaw, *Dance, Space and Subjectivity*, (London: Palgrave, 2001).

Memories of this performance will stay with me and be evoked when I walk around.[31]

The performance presented the library building and its environment in a new and unfamiliar light for staff, facilitating a different mode of experiencing and engaging with the site.

The concept of located-ness in site-specific performance describes an active interaction with space and place comprising both a physical and conceptual orienting of the body informed by phenomenological exchanges between the holistic self and the site. In this sense, located-ness appears as a fluid process through which the individual can become open to the potential of place whilst simultaneously grounded in its physical location. Located-ness describes a mobile process of locating the self in relation to an ever-shifting notion of the here and now, challenging notions of 'rooted-ness' and fixity commonly associated with definitions of place. The degree to which this form of participation and interaction occurs varies from individual to individual, in turn serving to shape and determine each individual's perception and reception of the performance work and the site in which it is located.

The site-specific dance performance event holds the potential to abstract, amplify and highlight some of the (often overlooked) everyday interconnected practices and processes of mobility

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[31] Extracts from audience questionnaires (library staff), *The Library Dances* project, September 2006.

experienced by the individual. Performance encounters like that of *The Library Dances* encourage individuals to become self-aware and present in their engagement with space, place and environment; they expose the ever-shifting, ever-mobile nature of these very individual physical and experiential processes.