



Extracts from April 2012 intensive

This is the first part of retrospective notes sent to the Half Moon artists after the two-day intensive encapsulating key content from the day. (Further extracts are used in the sections on Fearful Place and Everyday Place.)

16/17.4.12: Challenging Place two day intensive event with artists from the Half Moon

Overall research project title: **Challenging concepts of 'liquid' place through performance practices in community contexts.**

The aim of the project is to investigate the research questions:

1. What can practical intervention tell us about how abstract concepts such as place, community, dislocation and belonging, as theorised by contemporary academics, map onto the 'real life' experiences of vulnerable social groups?
2. Can one or more models of performance practices help to remedy feelings of 'dislocation' among community participants?
3. How might such models be evaluated, disseminated and made fully accessible to community theatre organisations?

The objectives are to:

- achieve three performing-place practical outcomes;
- record, evaluate and analyse the impact of these interventions in the three community settings;
- modify the models of performance practice in the light of outcomes of the three projects;
- present these as a workable facilitation 'pack' for use by a large number of community arts organisations;
- re-examine theories of the performance of place in applied contexts addressing extant and emergent interdisciplinary approaches to dislocation and mobility;
- disseminate the results of the work through three peer-reviewed journal articles, a symposium (for 75 or more community theatre organisations) and webpages containing the facilitation material; submit a book proposal on place and applied theatre practices.

As a result of the Half Moon two-day intensive, we are refining the aims within the overall project to specifically ask the following:

1. How might the performance project at Half Moon identify and 'ease' a fear of place?
2. How is everyday place 'performed'? How does expressing everyday place through performance shift the quotidian?



(Just background questions for me to think about ... how we think about these (or rethink them). For what purpose? To find more value in them? Simply to understand what young people think about everyday places? That we want to understand how young people might perform them differently and how that affects your sense of place?)

3. Are extra-ordinary e.g. 'special' places important? How do performance practices help demonstrate 'special places'? How does performance help enhance a relationship with a special or extraordinary place? (Notes to self - Half Moon theatre; maybe the virtual (or parts of the virtual). What's of interest for the research project here? Possibly something about asking how extra-ordinary places count 'more'?)

PLAN OF THE TWO DAYS

- Introductions.
- Introduce project. Use handouts. (Some of which is included here e.g. research questions and objectives.)
- Introduce companies.
Cyrff Ystwyth – I used photos and some clips of Cyrff Ystwyth material that had been used when the company was first introduced to me.

Oldham Theatre Workshop – I used links into OTW and talked about their work from there.

Half Moon – I used various things – 'Going to Half Moon' video clip of one of my first journeys there; website; Wonderful World video created by a youth group there.

- Introduced and discussed what I meant by place and performing place and work that has already taken place on this.
I used examples of the work on Performing Place www.performingplace.org from the Caer Llan Trilogy. (Click onto the website to remind yourselves? I showed you some stuff about the repetition of performances, for example, under Performing Place 1 – which is just two pages into the site.)

I emphasised certain key themes that were characteristic of performing place for me: Disruption; repetition of performance in sites; density of dwelling; excess (associated with performance of place); artists as those also being placed/the self in the work.

I referred to the work of others – Mike Pearson, Wrights and Sites and their Misguides and others.

- Anna talked about the 'virtual' and we introduced ourselves to how this might be thought about.



IDEAS from the group about themes or areas to focus on

1. Places of 'fear' and how to alleviate that
2. Special places?
3. Do people make place?
4. How does place 'define' you?
5. Do you exist in virtual place?
6. Exploring the 'sensation'/activity of a place. Possibly extending that into a fantasy of a place. 'Feeling' a place and how you might transform it.
7. Owning a place: the territorialism of place e.g. tree houses, forts. The extension within the 'norm'. How might that extend to facebook and the virtual.
8. Place-memory: e.g. remembering how they felt when they arrived at Half Moon. How their memory alters.
9. Fear – again: darkness and light
10. Daily encounters with place.
11. Feeling out-of-place (excluded: only 2 children in a shop...)
12. Why they are here right now.
13. Tangled web – interconnections, locationally, the density and all that comes into it e.g. the web being cut. The dislocation.
14. Language – bits of language: language of place. (virtual - detagging, status update, checking in)
15. How does one relate in this place – how we move through them and what's happening to us at that time: body, sound, personal space...
16. Sense memory of a place. How a smell or sound translates. (The most powerful sense...)
17. The story of the place – how we narrate our place. Or how do we therefore reperform our place. How do we work with young people whose base line of storytelling would not be ours (!). The *Eastenders* syndrome...
18. Rules of place. Young people 'challenging' the rules of place. They wish to push boundaries, test the rules of place. At other times, they don't want to challenge or break the rules of place e.g. how to operate in their own bedroom, or within Half Moon.
19. Sonic space. What is it – how would they describe it? Then what is their sonic 'place'? What would be your *ideal* sonic place? The value of silence.
20. Shared place? Or independent place? Consider the collaborations and the individualised.

Must remember that the very topic of performing place is probably dull for the participants. The place of performance somehow needs to challenge a certain perception of the topic. We are disrupting their wish for performance in that place.