

‘The natural place for the play’:
outdoor Shakespeares, environment, and an ethnography of audience experience

Submitted by Evelyn Mary O’Malley, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree
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for Mom, and the glaciers

ABSTRACT

This thesis asks, in what ways do audience members perceive the environment to be contributing to outdoor Shakespeares, even when the performance-makers are not attempting site-specificity in their practice? It seeks to consider where practice, research, and theory arising in connection with site-specific and ecological theatre and performance-making might illuminate the reception of Shakespeare's plays in outdoor settings, and whether there is potential for the audience responses to be put into a dialogue with some of the claims made for self-consciously site-specific and ecological performance forms in turn. How might audience responses productively challenge the ways we think about place and environment at these performances? And what, if anything, might be at stake for nature, environment, and ecology in the reception of this very particular kind of cultural event? Working with ethnographic observations and with the records of conversations gathered through one hundred and fifty-six semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face with two hundred and seventy-three participants during summers 2013 and 2014, the four chapters analyse these encounters with audiences, environment, and Shakespeare. The ethnographic methodology aspires to allow previously unheard audience members to account for their own experiences, despite the ethnographer's role in crafting of the final chapters, and despite the acknowledgement that 'experience' in the positivist sense cannot be captured and served up as writing. The written ethnography puts themes identified in the interviews into conversation with theoretical discourses around place and environment, shifting carefully between ecophenomenological and broadly materialist approaches. Extracts of audience interviews form the core and the through-line of the chapters. The research subsequently contributes to the fields of Shakespearean ecocriticism, site-specific theatre, ecology and performance, and audience research. Throughout, the argument is that turning our attention towards the nonhuman world, and to how it is perceived and framed by audience members at these performance events, urges us to consider outdoor Shakespeares as united by their happening outdoors, in weather, and contingent upon their (culturally contingent) outdoor contexts, prior to classifying them by other spatial configurations or aesthetic arrangements.

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Unless otherwise stated, photographs are by the author.

INTRODUCTION



Fig. 1 Taking Flight's *As You Like It*, Thompson's Park (2014)

The climate never influences our work anymore. [...] the essentials take place indoors and in words, never again outdoors with things.

(Serres 1995: 28-29)

People in industrialized countries spend an average of 93% of their time inside and thus are largely disconnected from the weather outside.

(Keller et al. 2005: 725)

To inhabit the open world, then, is to be immersed in the fluxes of the medium: in sunshine, rain and wind. This immersion, in turn, underwrites our capacities – respectively – to see, hear, and touch.

(Ingold 2007: 30)

*I remember waiting for a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to begin, crouched behind a tree and listening to the curator of Dublin's Botanic Gardens introduce the play. Expecting to hear a usual preamble comparing the touring company to a merry Elizabethan troupe, I was surprised instead to hear him note the audience's opportunity to observe the gardens' specialist plants at night time. Trees and plants look, smell and behave differently in the evening, he explained, and the audience should make the most of their after-hours*

*access. They would, of course, see a funny play by Shakespeare too. I spent most of that performance newly alert to the gardens in the changing light and dropping temperature, preoccupied by the shapes, smells, textures, colours, and shadows; as alive and present as any actor, audience member, Athenian lover, fairy, or mechanical. I found out later that the tree I had been waiting behind was a Sorbus mougeotii or Mougeot's Whitebeam, native to the Alps and as out of place in Glasnevin as a four-hundred-year-old play by an English playwright.*¹

This thesis looks at audiences for plays by Shakespeare, performed outdoors in parks and green spaces. It takes the form of an ethnography, using evidence from observations and interviews conducted with audience members before and after performances during summers 2013 and 2014. I suggest that the environment profoundly affects how audience members articulate their experience of outdoor Shakespeares and that our current accounts of these performances do not do justice to the relationships between people, performance, and place that are going on at these events. I consider how animals, birds, rain, rocks, sun, wind, trees, light, landscape, and a limited repertoire of canonical plays by a four hundred year old playwright were perceived as affecting perceptions of the theatrical event. It is one thing to sit on a bench with midges biting, sunlight forcing squinted vision, as clouds pass over and changing temperatures demand a sunhat one moment and a blanket the next. It is another to sit in a black plastic bag in a puddle, as rain batters and blurs vision, seeps into clothes and shoes, and hooded raincoats stifle hearing. I begin with the proposition, then, that the almost-too-obvious performance of 'culture' (a Shakespeare play) enacted in 'nature' (an outdoor environment) is a useful position from which to examine the much-problematized nature/culture binary.²

Responding to the now widely-anticipated global effects of anthropogenic climate change, environmental degradation, resource depletion, exploitation, and exhaustion, conversations broadly fitting within what has come to be known as the 'nonhuman turn' mark a decentring of the human at the centre of a swirling universe, shifting attention with

¹ In *Popular Shakespeare* (2009), Stephen Purcell integrates 'unashamedly subjective narratives' into his writing, taking the form of short subjective responses to performance between his 'scholarly' chapters (vii). Penelope Woods, after Peggy Phelan, Nicholas Ridout, and W.B. Worthen also incorporates 'performative writing', written in italics, into her work (2012: 51-52). The Methodology chapter explains how I have situated myself as an ethnographer within the field by including occasional recollections of performances and extracts from my field notes.

² Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May argue that the increase in unpredictable weather, natural disasters, and a growing body of evidence suggesting that we, human animals, are at least partly responsible for the environmental crisis, demonstrates how a nature/culture binary is not tenable (2012: 1).

urgency to the more-than-human world we live in,³ the world we ('we' in a small percentage of industrialized and industrializing cultures) continue to harm (Grusin 2015).⁴ Richard Grusin explains:

the nonhuman turn derives from theoretical movements that argue (in one way or another) against human exceptionalism, expressed most often in the form of conceptual or rhetorical dualisms that separate the human from the non-human – variously conceived as animals, plants, organisms, climatic systems, technologies, or ecosystems. (2015: x)

For Jane Bennett, the nonhuman turn 'can be understood as a continuation of earlier attempts to depict a world populated not by active subject and passive objects but by lively and essentially interactive materials, by bodies human and nonhuman' (in Grusin 2015: 224). Kate Soper's materialist philosophies of consumption and environment might fundamentally disagree with Bennett and Grusin on questions of human exceptionalism but Soper's pragmatic take on human disaffection with the pressures of Western neoliberal capitalism, with its long working hours and limited pleasures, shares with them the desire for less harmful and more sustainable ways of being-in-the-world (2012). In an ecologically-threatened world, the stakes of not paying attention to all forms of human performance in relation to their more-than-human counterparts, or of not thinking about how our 'culture' is implicated in 'nature', are too high not to consider. And yet we continue to refuse to respond in any significant way. Baz Kershaw, in *Theatre Ecology*, pathologizes that humans suffer from what he calls 'performance addiction' (2007: 11). A growing body of literature on climate change inaction and denial analyses this apparent paralysis in the face of apocalyptic futures (Cook and Washington 2011; Clark 2015: 159-173; Kerridge 2009; Klein 2014:15-18; Lack 2013; Morton 2013; Norgaard 2011; Oreskes and Conway 2010). One strand running through these works is a consensus that narratives of crisis, facts and figures, and cold, hard science have not been enough to generate significant behavioural change and that a different kind of imaginative shift is urgently needed if we are to adapt to a radically altered, time-limited habitat. The arts, broadly conceived, emerge as well-positioned to

³ David Abram first uses the term 'more-than-human' in *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1996). Arons and May adopt it in *Readings in Performance and Ecology*—it is now 'widely used', they write, in literary ecocriticism (2012: 1).

⁴ Dipesh Chakrabarty explains that scholars in the humanities must rely on overwhelming scientific evidence to support discussions of climate change, drawing on research undertaken by Naomi Oreskes between 1993-2003 that finds no disputation of anthropogenic climate change in 928 abstracts for peer reviewed journal articles in the sciences (2009: 200-201). Dee Heddon and Sally Mackey make a similar point about the reliance of theatre scholars on evidence from the sciences in their introduction to the issue of *Research in Drama Education* 'On Environmentalism' (2012: 167-168). Chakrabarty notes, however, that 'Only a few nations (some twelve or fourteen, including China and India in the last decade or so) and a fragment of humanity (about one-fifth) are historically responsible for most of the emissions of greenhouses gases so far' (2014: 10).

contribute something meaningful here, both in terms of communicating and complicating that message. As Kate Rigby points out, ‘science might be able to define limit conditions for healthy environments, but it cannot tell us why we might desire to share our living space with a diversity of plants and animals, or why we should treat them with respect’ (2011: 141). But more than communicating an S.O.S. message, art has the potential to encourage creative and imaginative engagement with the world outside. Alison Tickell, the Chief Executive of sustainability support and research organisation Julie’s Bicycle, is persuasive when she argues that ‘Creativity is the most sustainable and renewable energy source on the planet’ (2012: n.p.).⁵

More specifically, the context of an endangered planet has reached the discipline of drama, theatre, and performance studies. In 1994 Erika Munk introduced a special issue of *Theater* on ‘Theatre and Ecology’ by proposing that ‘Critics and scholars who want to investigate the way ecologies—physical, perceptual, imagined—shape dramatic forms stand at the edge of a vast, open field of histories to be rewritten, styles to rediscuss, contexts to re-perceive’ (5) and her call has been the impetus for multiple and multifarious studies of performance and ecology since. In one of the most significant contributions to this field, *Readings in Performance and Ecology* (2012), Wendy Arons and Theresa May argue for ‘the insights theatre and performance can provide into our material embeddedness and enmeshment in and with the more-than-human environment that contains and sustains us’ (2-3). They posit ‘ecodramaturgy’ as one way of revealing some of these insights, defining it as ‘theater and performance making that puts ecological reciprocity and community at the centre of its theatrical and thematic intent’ (4). Most of the performances that Arons and May’s collection includes, however, explicitly confront environmental concerns. ‘Ecological reciprocity and community’ are at the heart of the intentions behind much of the work they are writing about, although the book does advocate ‘reconsidering historical theater texts and performances with attention to the anthropocentric/ecologically hostile attitudes and behaviors they normalize’ (6). What, though, might audiences at Shakespeare outdoors have to do with questions of the nonhuman, beyond evoking an image of a stoic gathering, weathering *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in the rain, as the tide comes in? While the outdoor Shakespeares I am looking at have not been approached ecodramaturgically, my argument is that the context in which they happen does, nevertheless, provide the kinds of insights that ecodramaturgy seeks. Whether the performances of my case studies directly addressed their environments or not (and often they did so only superficially), nature was an important part

⁵ Julie’s Bicycle, now an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, was initially created to support sustainability agendas within the music industry in 2007.

of the lived performance experience for audience members, highlighting the embodied experience of being outdoors in ways that warrant more thorough consideration than they have previously received.

To take a warning, though, from Edward Gordon Craig (somewhat out of context), ‘We must not rush into the open-air and begin to wave our arms, and quote Shakespeare, and think we have achieved something by doing so’ (1983: 40 [1910]). Craig is listing ‘enthusiasts’ who think they have solved the ‘problem of theatre’, but it feels fitting that one of his enthusiasts is passionate about outdoor performance (40). Before I go any further I would like to be very clear that I am not attempting to suggest that performances of Shakespeare plays outdoors are going to bring into consciousness issues of climate change or to bring about behaviours that might help to mitigate any of its effects. The performances I am looking at reach too small a demographic in specific geographical areas; they are too limited by the nature of the texts they are working with; and the arts are notoriously immeasurable in terms of quantifiable impact anyway to be able to identify anything like correlative changes in the kind of ‘cultural imaginary’ of which Timothy Clark is so sceptical anyway (2015: 19-20). Any impact would be indirect at best, part of a much greater set of encounters within much wider circumstances, dependant on further contextual factors and far beyond the scope of this kind of research methodology to identify. I do think, however, that it is necessary and worthwhile to reconsider outdoor Shakespeares to see how they might contribute to extant and emergent discourses on the arts and environment, to listen for how a missing set of voices contributes to discussions of how we think and speak about both nature and culture. I also argue in later chapters that it is not impossible that outdoor Shakespeares do contribute (albeit in limited ways) to promoting in their audiences more care for the world around them. Travelling throughout England and Wales to conduct my fieldwork I met with some memorable gesticulation and declaimed poetry, but what stood out more than anything was the enthusiasm that existed for watching Shakespeare outdoors alongside a more general enthusiasm for being outdoors and in the company of others.

Precedents

Despite its being a prolific form of summer entertainment, to date there are few studies of contemporary outdoor Shakespeares in the U.K., excepting those that focus on the reconstructed Shakespeare’s Globe on London’s South Bank. Michael Dobson’s *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance* (2011), which includes a chapter on ‘Shakespeare in the open: outdoor performance’, charts the ‘long and underexplored history’ (155) of a tradition of amateur outdoor Shakespeares in the U.K. and provides the context for the kinds of

performances I am looking at. Dobson argues that ‘For many performers and spectators, indeed, outdoor performance and Shakespeare are now practically synonymous’ (155) and he jokes that ‘from June to August it is still practically impossible to be more than twenty miles from an open-air Shakespearean venue in mainland Britain without fleeing to the moorlands of Scotland’ (155). But although Dobson alludes to phenomenological experience peripherally in his allusions to ‘wet grass’ (182) and ‘weather’ (196), neither the outdoor environment nor audiences are the focus of his investigation.

Coinciding with the second year of my fieldwork, the publication of Rosemary Gaby’s *Open-Air Shakespeares: Under Australian Skies* (2014) represents the first book-length study to question how space, place, and environment exert influence upon outdoor Shakespeares, albeit in an Australian context. Gaby posits:

Any attempt to perform Shakespeare’s plays outside the confines of a building will draw attention to the confrontation between the text and the local environment. Local weather conditions, sounds, smells, flora, and even fauna may become part of the experience. Actors and audiences are exposed to the physical location of performance and the multifarious associations that come with it. (2014: 2-3)

The thrust of Gaby’s argument is that outdoor Shakespeare ‘cannot be cocooned from the place in which it occurs and, inevitably, perceptions of the location are heightened, becoming a dominant part of the performance experience’ (10). She holds that because site-specific performance usually emerges from ‘collaborations’ with space, no outdoor Shakespeare can ever be fully site-specific—given that the text precedes the performance/ space relationship—but she maintains that the effects produced by the outdoor environment at these performances are nonetheless complex and worth investigating:

Clearly open-air Shakespeares are not “site-specific” in the sense of emerging from or being purposely written in response to the space of performance. They do encompass a wide range of responses to place and space, however, whether the site is chosen for its relevance to the fictional space of the play, or simply for its convenience or popularity as a local space for recreation. (2014: 11)

Bolstered by Gaby’s study, my thesis moves beyond her work, positioning audience experiences of place, space, and performance in conversation with ecocritical frameworks. Whereas Gaby conducts a performance history, I have conducted an ethnography of contemporary audiences, making space for the previously unheard voices of the people who attend outdoor Shakespeares in the U.K. today. There are further differences between our studies, relating to the geographies of the U.K. and Australia that become apparent when I address the case studies in Chapters One and Two, but my research supports and complements Gaby’s, as her’s supports mine.

Aside from Dobson's, the only other scholarly work directly addressing contemporary outdoor Shakespeares in the U.K. is Stephen Purcell's *Popular Shakespeare* (2009). Purcell anecdotally touches on phenomenological engagement with place and space, referring to the practices of a number of small-scale outdoor Shakespeare companies as part of a discussion of many forms of 'popular' Shakespeare. He concludes the book with a personal response to Illyria's *The Tempest* performed outdoors. Despite initial misgivings about the first half of the performance, in the darkness outside Purcell finds himself so drawn to the Shakespeare 'myth', which seems 'perfectly intact', that he reflects, 'It seems a shame to deconstruct it' (224). While the ineffability of theatre is nothing new, what interests me in this example is how and in what ways the onset of darkness might have contributed to the experience that Purcell describes. Together, Gaby's, Dobson's, and Purcell's are the principal and substantive texts specifically addressing contemporary productions of outdoor Shakespeare. My research builds upon and challenges aspects of their writing on Shakespeare, space, and place, but I take the lived experience of the outdoor performance as articulated by audience members as my main subject.

My project subsequently intersects four fields of critical study: theatre/ performance and ecology; site-based performance; Shakespearean ecocriticism; and audience research. In addition to the growing body of work I alluded to briefly above on theatre/performance and ecology, there also exists a growing field of literary Shakespearean ecocriticism, as a sub-field of literary ecocriticism. The Literature Review attends to scholarship in these four fields in more detail, but, for now, I want to identify the moment in time and scholarship at which my project has been undertaken. While Arons and May note that the 'critical and theoretical intersections between literary ecocriticism and theatre/performance studies [...] have been slowly but increasingly articulated over the past two decades' (2012: 3), there is only little evidence, as yet, of ecocritical studies of theatre and performance crossing over with literary Shakespearean ecocriticism. Until now, Shakespearean eco-critics have largely focussed on eco-critical re-readings of the plays rather than looking at the plays in performance (Borlik 2011; Brayton and Bruckner 2011; Egan 2006; Estok 2011; O'Dair 2008; Nardizzi 2013; Martin 2015; Watson 2006). Downing Cless's *Ecology and Environment in European Drama* (2010), which includes a chapter on 'ecodirecting' *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* (91-118), is a notable exception (although Cless uses his own productions as case studies, which somewhat limits the scope of his writing). As Shakespearean ecocritics contemplate the limits of niche research for a small audience (Estok 2011: 241; Garrard 2011: xxii-xxiv; O'Dair 2011: 82), untheorized performances of Shakespeare's plays outdoors already reach

relatively substantial audiences in the U.K. and across the world every summer. To date, there are no substantive ecocritical studies looking at outdoor Shakespeares in performance.

Concurrent with the simultaneous surges of interest in theatre/performance and ecology and in ecocritical re-readings of Shakespeare's plays, scholarship in the area of audience research has called for more direct consultation with 'real' audience members, leading to subsequent developments in qualitative, empirical, and ethnographic methodologies for gathering responses (Edgar et al. 2014; Freshwater 2009; Purcell 2013; Reason 2006, 2010; Reason and Sedgman 2015; Sauter 2002, 2010; Tulloch 2005; Woods 2012). Indeed, Matthew Reason and Kirsty Sedgman introduce a recent themed section of theatre audiences in *Participations Journal of Audience & Reception Studies* hoping it 'might mark the point within theatre studies when we can stop bemoaning the absence of audiences as a topic of empirical research' (2015: 117). Penelope Woods's doctoral thesis on *Globe Audiences: Spectatorship and Reconstruction at Shakespeare's Globe* (2012) has been the main influence on the development of my methodology. Woods's exploration in empirical qualitative audience research, carried out as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Collaborative Doctoral Award between Shakespeare's Globe and Queen Mary, University College London, was a valuable starting point for my own ethnographic research, as was Woods herself in offering assistance regarding planning and ethical considerations early on in the project (Woods 2013). Woods developed and tested methods for obtaining audience feedback through face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and long table discussions, and her methods are subsequently some of the most developed in the field. My research draws extensively on Woods's work, to which the Methodology chapter returns in some detail, and then branches off from her work in accordance with the needs of my own research questions and in response to my time in the field. With the exception of Woods's thesis at the auditorium of Shakespeare's Globe, there are as yet no empirical, ethnographic, or qualitative studies of audiences for outdoor Shakespeares in the U.K., and none positioned in conversation with ecocritical frameworks.

Aims

My research aims to:

- Ask how the outdoor environment influences audience experience at performances of Shakespeare plays in outdoor settings;

- Assess where practice, research, and theory arising from site-specific and/or ecological theatre and performance-making might illuminate the reception of Shakespeare's plays in outdoor settings;
- Consider whether and how the effects reported by audience members at outdoor Shakespeares might speak to some of the claims made for the experience of space, place, and environment within self-consciously site-specific and/or ecological performance-making;
- Illustrate the potential of outdoor Shakespeares as a place from which to consider our human entanglement within a more-than-human world.

Research Questions

- Even when outdoor Shakespeares are not attempting site-specificity in their practice, in what ways do audience members perceive the outdoor environment to be contributing to the live performance event?
- How might audience responses to outdoor Shakespeares productively challenge the ways we think about place and environment at these performances?

My initial interest in this subject materialized around questions of outdoor Shakespeares, their aesthetic, formal, and political relationships with space and place, and their seeming distance from site-based performance. It was during the first year of conducting the ethnographic fieldwork that my focus shifted to 'nature' and 'environment', because these were so much a part of what audience members were talking about. Audience responses were so attentive to what was in the spaces and places of performance—besides the performances themselves—that my questions necessarily moved towards the experience of nature and environment, redirecting my wider attention towards theory within the environmental humanities. I added to my research questions:

- What, if anything, might be at stake for nature, environment, and ecology at outdoor Shakespeares in the reception of this very particular kind of cultural event?

Subsequently, this thesis is more focussed on nature, environment, and ecology than I initially anticipated. In order to get to ecology, though, I have to go back a bit.

Open-air Shakespeare and site-specific performance

In July 2012 Arts Council England published details of a tender for funding to create outdoor performance for the under-5s. The Frequently Asked Questions section of the Small Wonders commission stated that ‘open-air theatre’ practitioners were not to apply, with the following rationale supplied:

Q. Why are we not interested in 'open-air theatre' or indoor theatre re-created in an outdoor setting?

Outdoor Arts is an area of presentation in its own right. It requires a different way of working in order to meet the many demands working outdoors brings. We are not looking for passive audience experiences; the work must stand up to the rigours of the outdoor festival environment. Work designed for an indoor theatre space, is extremely difficult to transfer outdoors bearing in mind we are usually working with very little infrastructure and cannot re-create theatre conditions outdoors. (2012: 1)

That indoor and outdoor theatre are different forms requiring different treatment, skills, and approaches seems incontestable. What is odd, however, is that the wording of the question considers ‘open-air theatre’ and ‘indoor theatre re-created in an outdoor setting’ to be synonymous, inferring that makers of open-air theatre lack the skills to make theatre for outdoor settings. If the suggestion is that *open-air* theatre makers do not understand the requirements of working in the open-air, then the brief presupposes a practitioner/ reader cognisant with the evolution of a nuanced and implicitly coded terminology. It is not my intention to investigate arts policy or funding, but the Small Wonders’ example usefully points to how deeply a particular perception of ‘open-air theatre’ is entrenched. Although the commission sought a newly devised piece of children’s theatre, I suggest that twentieth century performances of *Shakespeare* are at least partly responsible for this way of classifying open-air theatre as ‘indoor-theatre-performed-outdoors’ (despite the irony that much early modern theatre was originally written for outdoor performance).

There is more implied in the Small Wonders’ brief than a nod to the formal differences between open-air theatre and outdoor arts. The implicit assumption is that its reader/practitioner will understand differences that are partly to do with how a performance formally and aesthetically engages with space, but also to do with what a performance does socially, culturally, politically, and environmentally. The reader needs to understand the inference that ‘open-air theatre’ is a largely safe middle-brow activity, possibly consisting of an iteration of some kind of historical, canonical text, whereas ‘outdoor arts’ are more socially engaged, less formally defined, and probably more visual. This is not to set up a form/content distinction but to think about how Shakespeare epitomises the idea of a certain construction of open-air theatre. The National Trust’s Events’ webpage, for instance,

constructs Shakespeare as a reliable, safe, and comfortable fixture. The page reads, ‘Our houses and gardens make grand settings in which to enjoy a spot of Shakespeare, watch an open air concert complete with fireworks, or even to attend a music festival’ (National Trust 2012). Although the repertoire of outdoor performances at historic houses, gardens, and monuments managed by the National Trust now stretches far beyond Shakespeare, his plays still encapsulate the idea of open-air theatre on the heritage circuit. Shakespeare, as Susan Bennett argues, ‘is the signifier beyond all others in an international marketing economy’ (1996: 36). He evokes a particular kind of National Trust experience. His plays are light, familiar, and reassuring; enjoyable as ‘a spot’.

This cultural understanding of Shakespeare outdoors emerges from a historical performance tradition that has little to do with early modern forms of performance. The history of outdoor Shakespeares dating from the late eighteenth century is presented by Dobson as inescapably conservative. Dobson describes the aristocratic origins of the Pastoral Players’—‘the theatre club of the Aesthetic Movement’—performances of *As You Like It* in Coombe Woods, Surrey in 1884 and 1885 on private land, leading to a fashion for Shakespeare in the open-air, which was then championed by Sir Philip Barling Ben Greet into the early twentieth century (2011: 164). Greet’s ‘copycat’ Woodland Players presented *As You Like It* not long after the Pastoral Players’ production, ‘on location’, in the ubiquitous Forest of Arden (173). As Dobson explains, “The Woodland Players’ advertisements for their 1887 performances at Barrett’s Park in Henley-in-Arden [...] excitedly promised ‘As You Like It performed for the first time in Shakespeare’s native Forest of Arden’” (174). Greet’s approach to marketing his performances capitalized on imaginative links between Shakespeare’s plays and particular outdoor locations:

Sharing the same delight in site-specific re-enactment that informed the Edwardian pageant, he [Greet] was especially pleased, for example, to be able to perform in the grounds of Wilton House in Wiltshire, rumoured to have been the venue for the premiere or even the composition of *As You Like It*, where he billed his own production as ‘the *second* performance of this play at Wilton.’ (Dobson 2011: 174 [original emphasis])⁶

No surprise, then, that *As You Like It*’s Forest of Arden—variously imagined and contested as pastoral, antipastoral, Arcadia, Eden, idyllic, gritty, nurturing, and transformative—has continued to be a favourite, almost a cliché, in outdoor theatre since. Greet’s Woodland Players initially toured to private venues and later expanded to performing in public parks

⁶ I discuss site-specificity later in the Introduction and again in Chapter Two, but it is worth noting here that the way in which Dobson—primarily a Shakespeare scholar—employs the term ‘site-specific’ evidences some inconsistency in how the term is used across the discipline of drama.

and gardens, Dobson explains (2011: 175). Around the same time, Louis Napoleon Parker's large-scale historical pageants also popularized the idea of Shakespeare outdoors, involving mass participation from community-minded amateurs in their thousands (167-170). Performances of Shakespeare's plays outdoors continued to flourish in the U.K. during the early decades of the twentieth century, prior to Greet's founding of the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, London, in 1932. Not long afterwards, on the European continent, Max Reinhardt's lavish *The Merchant of Venice* at the Campo San Trovaso, Venice (1934) and Tyrone Guthrie's infamously rained-off *Hamlet* at Kronberg Castle, Elsinore (1937) also demonstrated an appetite for Shakespeare linked with location, revealing a variety of historical, aesthetic, and ideological functions. Robert Shaughnessy describes Guthrie's Kronberg production, as 'a site specific event exploiting the convergence between the cultural authority of the play and the magic of this 'authentic' location'" (2002: 108).⁷ This first Kronberg performance was infamously forced to take place in the round in a make-shift indoor space at the last minute due to rain, shaping Guthrie's subsequent approach to indoor stage layout and the architecture of the Festival Theatre in Stratford, Ontario (Shaughnessy 2002: 112-114; Falocco 2010: 108-109).

Such a longstanding tradition of Shakespeare and outdoor performance begs the question of why then, when John Russell Brown proposes looking to outdoor theatre to retrieve the original 'spirit' of Elizabethan theatre, does he look to street theatre companies such as Welfare State International and Bread and Puppet Theatre without mentioning popular outdoor Shakespeares in the U.K. since the late 1800s (2002: 11-18)? Neither does Brown mention that Welfare State has actually worked with Shakespeare's texts as stimulus material for some of their outdoor performances—*Tempest on Snake Island* and *The Wagtail and the Wasteland* are based on *The Tempest* and *King Lear* respectively (Coult and Kershaw 1990: 164-181; Fox 2002: 64-68). The answer likely relates to the legacy of the aristocratic beginnings of outdoor Shakespeares as sketched out above, but also to an equation Brown makes between early modern Shakespeares in their original contexts and a vision of a socially-inclusive, democratic outdoor performance space. The aristocratic beginnings of open-air Shakespeares still cling to performances today, exemplified by the idea of Shakespeare at the National Trust. Observing opulent picnics at one such contemporary event, Purcell reflects that 'An open-air performance, for example, may seem free from the trappings of a Victorian proscenium arch theatre, but the presence among its audience of expensive picnic hampers and popping champagne corks can cast it in a very different light' (2005: 83). No examination

⁷ As above, to note, Shaughnessy's use of 'site-specific' is not entirely consonant with use of the term outside of Shakespeare studies.

of audiences at outdoor Shakespeares today can completely set aside cultural materialist concerns.

Since the 1980s, cultural materialist criticism has necessarily attended to political struggles around class, gender, race, and sexuality, putting Shakespeare back into the early modern period, exposing repressive ideologies, and searching for subversion, dissidence, and rupture both within Shakespeare's original texts and within contemporary adaptations of the plays (Dollimore 2010; Dollimore and Sinfield 1994; Drakakis 1985; Hawkes 1996; Henderson 2007; Holderness 1988; Parvini 2012; Sinfield 2006). The idea of a Shakespeare who transcends time has been rightly criticized as conservative and regressive within this framework. Introducing their landmark *Political Shakespeare* (1994), Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield explain that 'culture is made continuously and Shakespeare's text is reconstructed, reappraised, reassigned all the time through diverse institutions in specific contexts' (vii). Responding to arguments between cultural materialism and its forerunner, 'new criticism', Ivo Kamps summarises that 'the prevailing sentiment on the Right is that Shakespeare transcends his historical moment—he is not for an age but for all time—because his genius allowed him to capture what is most true, universal, and enduring about human nature' (1991: 1). Equally sceptical of a transcendental Shakespeare, Susan Bennett argues that 'Theatre is [...] generally and rightly regarded as a conservative art form, and the devotion to Shakespeare a manifestation of that inherent conservatism' (1996: 12). Robert Shaughnessy points out that, compared with radical, avant-garde practices in other areas of performance, the 'pace of innovation and levels of excitement' in adaptations of Shakespeare—particularly in the U.K.—has been 'antediluvian' (2002: 8).⁸ Benjamin Fowler's article on the reception of the Wooster Group's indoor production of *Troilus and Cressida* on tour in the U.K. supports such a view of England, Shakespeare, and conservatism, provoking that British theatre critics remain so focussed on the Shakespearean text that they are stuck in 'hegemonic shackles that hobble mainstream British Shakespeare to the demonstration of the author's meaning' (2014: 209).⁹ The inherent conservatism of

⁸ Although this thesis focuses on performances in the U.K., it is useful to note more radical outdoor adaptations abroad. Corinne Jaber's *Love's Labour's Lost* in Kabul, Afghanistan, saw men and women acting together for the first time in Afghanistan, and in public space outdoors (Carroll 2010: 443-445). Corcadorca in Cork, Ireland, presented *The Merchant of Venice* as an outdoor, promenade piece, with a view to addressing concerns around eastern-European immigration and local racism (Fitzpatrick 2007). Ava Roy's *Hamlet* on Alcatraz Island, San Francisco explored ideas of the mind as a prison, with reviews claiming that wet weather 'enlivened and invigorated' the serious question of 'How much do we ourselves control our own enslavement?' (Eastwood 2011: 464).

⁹ Fowler also cites a *Telegraph* review, which notes a conversation with a barman from the Dirty Duck (the pub opposite the RST in Stratford upon Avon) reporting 'notoriously high levels of interval audience abscondence' during the Wooster Group's run of *Troilus and Cressida* there (2014:230).

Shakespeare, combined with the history of open-air Shakespeares that Dobson charts, as well as the varied resources, levels of experience, and aesthetic qualities to be found in outdoor Shakespeares today, contribute to confirming a particular view of the practice—to the extent that negative connotations around ‘open-air theatre’ are institutionally manifest in arts policy (as seen in the Small Wonders commission). The case studies in this thesis are not examples of the kinds of radical or disjunctive Shakespeares that cultural materialists have sought to bring to light (with the possible exception of Teatro Vivo’s adaptation of *The Tempest*, discussed in Chapter Two). They do, to greater and lesser extents, subscribe to the idea of a universal and timeless Shakespeare, however problematically, and this is a part of what sets them apart from much site-specific performance—politically as much as formally.

Shakespeare’s plays were—we were told for a long time—written for early modern theatre conventions, located in spoken references to place that indicate where scenes happen (Dessen 1984: 84-104; Farabee 2014: 93; Gurr in Mulryne and Shewring 1997: 167; Kiernan 1999: 71; Styan 1967 44-47). Theatre phenomenologist Bert States describes the Elizabethan stage as a ‘tabula rasa whereupon the actor could draw the ever-shifting pictures of the text’ (1981: 56) and Philip Schwyzer considers Rudyard Kipling’s *Puck of Pook’s Hill*, where schoolchildren summon the spirit of Shakespeare’s Puck with an outdoor re-enactment of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, going as far as to suggest that ‘in the light of actual Elizabethan staging practices, the notion of Shakespeare writing *Midsummer* for outdoor performance in a Fairy Ring—or even imagining such a performance—can only seem absurd’ (2013: 179). Marvin Carlson makes a similar point regarding the inherent contradictions of the ‘iconographic’ settings Greet chose for his late nineteenth-century performances (1990). Carlson observes:

In an actual Elizabethan performance, of course, a street scene, a forest, or a chamber would have been as far from any iconic representation of the original as the neutral settings of the French classic stage, but now Shakespeare began to be presented according to the new vision of the historically accurate setting. (1990: 78)

In light of the ‘spatial turn’ of the 1960s and 1970s, and of discourses around contemporary site-specific theatre, it follows unsurprisingly that Peter Brook’s famous declaration, ‘I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage’ (1968: 11) has been held up as an example of the erroneous assumption that theatre space can be ‘empty’ prior to performance (Carlson 2001: 132; Gaby 2014: 9; McAuley 1999: 2; Purcell 2009: 174). In direct contrast to States’s early modern stage as a ‘tabula rasa’, Miwon Kwon argues that, as use of the term ‘site-specific’ increased in the twentieth century to describe a certain set of art practices: ‘the space of art was no longer perceived as a blank slate, a tabula rasa, but a real place’ (2004:11). Mike

Pearson's subsequent description of site as 'a scene of plenitude, its inherent characteristics, manifold effects and unruly elements always liable to leak, skill and diffuse into performance' (2010: 1) furthers this understanding of spaces as 'full' and not blank slates or containers waiting to be filled with performance. But if opposing conceptions of performance space as or not as a 'tabula rasa' might appear to offer an easy way of distinguishing between the respective aesthetics of site-specific performance and early modern theatre in its original context, then early modern theatre scholar Jenny Sager complicates this tempting simplicity by proposing that the widely held belief that the Elizabethan stage was bare is 'one of the biggest misapprehensions of early modern theatre criticism' (2013: 1). Sager presents evidence of stage properties and spectacle in Robert Greene's plays, to challenge longstanding assumptions around the empty nature of the early modern stage. The Elizabethan theatre space wasn't empty either.

However much, then, contemporary outdoor Shakespeares resemble their early modern counterparts or site-specific performance today in their spatial configurations, they emerge from a very different political heritage to that which precedes twentieth century site-specific performance. The origins of site-specific performance traced through 'happenings', inspired by Allan Kaprow and others, the practices of the Situationists, and the land artists all represent projects motivated by very different political objectives to open-air Shakespeares (Hodge and Turner 2012: 95). It follows unsurprisingly that scholars and makers of outdoor arts and site-specific performance, in seeking languages and legitimacy for their work, have used 'open-air Shakespeare' or 'Shakespeare-in-the-park' to describe what their work is *not* (Aronson 1981: 3; Escolme 2013: 505; Wrights & Sites 2001: n.p.: 150; Mason 1992: 6-7; Smith 2010: 113). Gaby, for instance, notices the position of 'Shakespeare-in-the-park' on Stephen Hodge's 'continuum for Site-Specific Performance', created as a contribution to a joint authored paper with artist-researcher group Wrights & Sites (Gaby 2014: 10; originally Wrights & Sites 2001: n.p.). Hodge's continuum works through a spectrum of possible relationships between performance and space, with 'performances in theatre buildings' on the far left of the diagram and 'site-specific performance' on the right. 'Shakespeare-in-the-park' is positioned next to performance in theatre buildings, in the only category outside the theatre building not including the word 'site' in its title. Fiona Wilkie also differentiates between outdoor Shakespeares generally and the work of Creation Theatre Company in Oxford, arguing that Creation's outdoor Shakespeare 'differs from the popular 'al fresco Shakespeare' category of performance through the re-engagement with the physical aspects of the site that informs each production' (2002: 146). As is so often the case, the 'popular al fresco' category to which Wilkie refers does not feature elsewhere in the article. It

is important to bear in mind at this point that site-specific performance does not necessarily take place outdoors, although Wilkie finds it 'twice as likely' to take place outdoors as indoors (2002: 154).

Purcell also uses Creation Theatre Company to discuss Shakespeare, space, and site-specificity, although he does not distinguish between indoor and outdoor spaces in this chapter of *Popular Shakespeare* (2009: 202-203). He challenges Creation's self-description of their work as site-specific, conceding that the non-theatre spaces in which they perform must nevertheless contribute to how their work is received:

While these locations [that Creation perform in] undoubtedly add a great deal to what might be described as the 'atmosphere' of the performance (more specifically, the set of semiotic associations prompted by the location which impact upon the audience's meaning-making process during the performance), I am not sure that Creation's productions interact with their locations in quite the same way as Brith Gof's. (2009:203)

In keeping with Hodge's continuum, Purcell differentiates between performances in non-theatre spaces and site-specific practices that consciously 'interact with their locations'. Even when the former is the case, however, Purcell touches on the idea that the stimuli of the non-theatre environment must still influence reception, although he does not go on to question how or in what ways. Chapter Three returns to the idea of an 'atmosphere' alluded to here, but it is useful to observe that, for Purcell, Shakespeare, as a text-based practice, is 'fundamentally at odds with the 'critical' attitude and indeed with 'site-specificity' in general (or at least the definition of site-specificity put forward here)' (2009: 204).

Another of the examples Gaby picks out is Bridget Escolme's article on 'Shakespeare, Rehearsal and the Site-Specific' for *Shakespeare Bulletin* (2012). Escolme sets up the site-specific performances of her article by distancing them from outdoor Shakespeares. She writes that 'Shakespeare outside of the theatre might rather recall relentlessly cheerful summer productions, set against lovely, verdant or historical backdrops but in no way infected or inflected by "site", except insofar as the actors are required to shout beyond their capacity' (2012: 505). I am in complete agreement with Gaby when she responds to Escolme, arguing that outdoor Shakespeares (and, feasibly, all forms of outdoor performance) 'are still inevitably infected and inflected by site and that it is worth considering some of the ways this might be felt' (2014: 11).

There are many further instances of Shakespeare outdoors being used to describe what other forms of performance are not, pointing to an even wider-reaching tendency than Gaby presents, and to potentially higher-stakes outcomes. Introducing *Environmental*

Scenography (1981) Arnold Aronson explains why outdoor Shakespeares do not receive considerable attention in his book, which takes experimental and avant-garde environmental performance as its subject. '[M]ost open-air theatres', Aronson writes, 'the Shakespeare-in-the-park theatres [...] are nothing more than frontal stages moved outside' (3), although he does admit that 'many spectators have probably had the experience of feeling that the surrounding natural features—the sky, trees, distant mountains, or even buildings—were somehow incorporated into the setting' (3). Bim Mason differentiates between street theatre and outdoor Shakespeares in a similar vein. Mason's *Street Theatre and other outdoor performance* (1992) is still the most substantial work on outdoor performance, and within it he states:

In London's Regent's Park every summer, plays by Shakespeare are performed at night with lights, on a stage, with a backdrop, wings and a seated audience. Although this is undeniably theatre outdoors and very professional, it is not substantially different from indoor theatre. (1992: 6-7)

Continuing the same trend, psychogeographer Phil Smith argues that the term site-specific 'is now regularly *purloined* for "Shakespeare in the Park"' (2010: 113 [emphasis added]), and ecocritic and performance-maker Downing Cless distances his own indoor productions of Shakespeare's plays from outdoor performances, arguing that 'be it Shakespeare "in the park" and "under the stars" or massive reinventions of Eden on indoor stages [...] modern theatre tends to romanticise nature in the few instances when it is not erased within domestic realism' (2010: 6). Given their respective environmental, street arts, political, and ecological leanings, and the performance forms upon which Aronson, Mason, Smith, and Cless are focused, it makes sense that they quickly distance themselves from Shakespeare-in-the-park—especially in light of legitimate criticisms of a perceived conservatism in both Shakespeare and 'open-air' theatre. Cumulatively, however, these casual dismissals contribute to building a homogenous category of outdoor Shakespeares as always in opposition to consciously progressive, socially, politically, or environmentally engaged outdoor arts practices. This, I argue, needs to be destabilized.

Two recent and relatively high profile 'site-specific' productions of Shakespeare in the U.K. seem to do just this, confirming the timeliness of raising questions around Shakespeare and spatial practices. *Coriolanus*, Pearson and Mike Brookes's reworking of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* with Brecht's adaptation of the same play, took place indoors at an airport hangar in St Athan, South Wales in August 2012. Audiences moved through the space watching the performance in mixed media: live, through headphones, and on screens. Exemplifying another formal approach to space altogether, Shakespeare's Globe's 2013 battlefield performances of the *Henry VI* trilogy were marketed as 'site-specific' though

staged end-on. A makeshift stage was brought former battlefields and audiences sat on picnic chairs watching a stationary performance (*Henry VI Battlefield* 2014). At the *Henry VI* performances, any links between the plays' contents and the performance locations were notional, discernible only in imaginative, historical, and thematic resonances, and not in site-exploratory staging practices. Nonetheless, the relatively high profile of the Globe's battlefield performances and Pearson/ Brookes's *Coriolan/us* at the time of starting my research indicated growing interest in the relationship between Shakespeare and site-specific performance. The existence of these performances supports the contention that a too-easy dichotomy positions performances of Shakespeare's plays and site-specific performances at opposite ends of any kind of formal, aesthetic, or political continuum. My argument is that, in light of the nonhuman turn, there is a need to give more weight to the role of the outdoor environment in generating some of these effects. It also urges a more precise articulation of what is shared and what is different between the practices and how this does or doesn't map onto audience reception.

Performing outdoors

Dobson asks, 'given its potential for discomfort [...] Why perform or watch Shakespeare out of doors at all, in a climate like this?', concluding that 'the popularity of outdoor Shakespeares probably has less to do with what outdoor performance in such locations does aesthetically for the plays than with what the plays do ideologically for the locations' (2011: 187). He adds, 'Like Edwardian pageants, open-air productions of Shakespeare integrate specific places within a nostalgic vision of the nation, its history and its culture' (187). Shakespeare's plays certainly do ideological work for the outdoor locations in which they are performed—the Globe's 2013 battlefield performances are an especially good case in point—but the audience responses I am working with demonstrate that Shakespeare also does something ideologically for an experience of nature, and nature for Shakespeare by way of return. The proposition I keep coming back to is that there is more to the experience of being outdoors, physically and imaginatively, contributing to the appeal of outdoor Shakespeare than Dobson credits. Dobson alludes to parallels between the imperialist undertones behind the outdoor Shakespeares and pageants in the early 1920s and 1930s, and to the propagandist uses of authenticity, vitality, healthy activities, and pageantry that accompanied the rise of Fascism in Europe at this time (2011: 189). This troubling part of a history of performance in the open-air continues, understandably, to preoccupy those writing about the outdoor environment in relation to theatre and performance, especially in the contemporary context of ecology. Dancer and researcher Paula Kramer articulates more expansively what Dobson hints at, and is worth citing at length here because she brings

together a complex set of valid and widely felt concerns that continue to trouble writing on environment, nature, and performance. Kramer cautions about ‘easy at hand assumptions’ about dancers working outdoors (2012: 83). She queries:

Is their primary goal something in the order of redemption, enlightenment or returning to ‘nature’? Are these human movers ‘out there’ to become part of a purer world, moving like rivers or trees, in order to shed the burdens of daily life distortions in success-driven and human-controlled structures? Or—this would be the other extreme—do they simply ‘use’ nature as a picturesque or spectacular backdrop for performance? The former might be a truncated carry-over from early-twentieth-century dance practices experimenting in nature in the face of rapid modernization and industrialization. Courageously countering corsets and conventions, this legacy is simultaneously and ambiguously filled with romantic longings that later resonated dangerously with Nazi ideologies. Subsequent alternative/eco/hippie practices of ‘communing’ with nature might also feed an image that is not entirely helpful for approaching the territory. (2012: 83)

Kramer’s concerns can be helpfully carried over to concerns around Shakespeare performed outdoors. The pitfalls she cites, ranging from perceptions of spiritually redemptive practices to utilizing nature as a resource, as scenery, mean that any account that attempts to speak of ‘the effects of being outdoors’, of ‘being in nature’ or ‘the open air’ must be approached cautiously and with care. The discussion of ‘Nature’ in the next section returns to some of the theoretical arguments arising from these concerns. The term ‘outdoor’ is therefore no less tainted or difficult than ‘open-air’—although, arguably, in the context of theatre and performance, it carries slightly less cultural baggage. Constructions of what is ‘out-of-doors’ are always inevitably culturally contingent, and any boundaries between what might be considered ‘in’ and ‘out’ of doors are also inevitably porous and culturally reliant. What privilege is inherent in the assumption of a door? And what kinds of doors are implied anyway—wooden, handled, glass, iron, curtained? How porous are the boundaries between indoors and out? Where is indoors, for instance, if I traipse leaves from the footpath outside into a house on a shoe, or a window blows open and a draught unsettles papers in a room? What is the difference between the absence of a roof and the absence of walls? And how does Shakespeare’s Globe, where a portion of the sky is open to the air, to the elements, differ from an outdoor theatre space that might have no walls at all? Or differ from the Willow Globe, Llanwyrthyl, mid Wales (discussed in Chapter One), where the walls are made of deciduous willow leaves, always growing, acting as homes and thresholds for bugs, birds, light, wind, and moisture—passing through?

The challenge is not to jettison immediately the affective agency of the outdoor environment with its murky past cultural appropriations. As Keller et al’s research shows, people in industrialized countries tend to spend at least 93% of their time indoors (2005:

725). It seems plausible, without making too great a generalization, to suggest that many of the people in the theatre audiences I studied, in contemporary Britain, might spend the significant proportion of a day otherwise indoors. Without losing a sense of the problems, then, I want to try to find a way to speak about how being outdoors has a bearing on how audience members spoke about their experiences of outdoor Shakespeares, keeping in mind that this constitutes a very particular cultural, leisure experience. I am attempting to think about outdoor performance in a way that acknowledges the effects of the weather, while also complicating the invigorating, masculine ‘outdoorsy’ activities, of which Timothy Morton is rightly wary; Morton asks impatiently, ‘Must we accept the injunction to turn on, tune in, shut up, go outdoors and breathe Nature?’ (2010: 16). Throughout the thesis my argument is for the need to think about outdoor Shakespeares in a way that is both sensitive to audience members’ experiential, embodied responses to ‘being outdoors’ and alert but not bounded to the kinds of cultural constructions of ‘being outdoors’ that correspond with oppressive forms of masculinity, nationalism, ableism, and resourcism.

I am opting to use the term ‘outdoor’ rather than ‘open-air’ to facilitate a moving away from limiting perceptions of Shakespeare-in-the-park. Also, to acknowledge the diversity of contemporary practice, the ‘Shakespeares’ of my title follows the contention first made in the *Alternative Shakespeares*’ series that there are not ‘one’ but ‘many’ Shakespeares (Drakakis 1985; also Bulman 1996: 1). As I begin to map some of the range of outdoor Shakespeares, the use of the plural acknowledges the diverse formal approaches to practice and contexts that might be included under this heading—even within the limited U.K. geography of this research.

Key terms

Given that this thesis takes the form of an ethnography, the four chapters largely attempt to utilise terminology as participants did. Subsequently, there is no need to participate in what Shakespearean ecocritic Sharon O’Dair refers to as the new historicist ‘what I call’ movement, by coining neologisms here (2008: 475). What follows sets out how terms are being employed, acknowledging and attending to some of the wider theoretical arguments that surround them in critical discourse. First, I look at the controversial terms ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, as the recognisability of distinct constructions of nature and culture sets up my investigation. Then, more briefly, I clarify how ‘space, place, and ‘site’, ‘environment and ecology’, and ‘audience, spectators, and participants’ are being utilized in the chapters.

Nature

Raymond Williams's *Keywords* (1976) is frequently the first port of call for understandings of 'nature' and 'culture'; which are for Williams respectively 'perhaps *the* most complex' (219 [emphasis added]), and 'one of the two or three most complicated' (87) words in the English language.¹⁰ Baz Kershaw proposes that nature and culture are so contentious that 'rigour could only be achieved by a wholesale adoption of Jacques Derrida's technique of placing the words *sous rature* ('under erasure'), thus ~~culture~~ and ~~nature~~' (2007: 22). Kershaw, however, does not adopt such erasure in his own writing on ecology because of its seeming affectedness, which might wear on the reader, and because of the limits it might impose on the diverse and eclectic material in his book (22). The nature I am looking at through the eyes of audience members at outdoor Shakespeares represents a very particular cultural construction of capital 'N' Nature. Morton explains how 'Nature, practically a synonym for evil in the Middle Ages, was considered the basis of social good by the Romantic period' (2007:15), and Timothy Clark considers the legacy of this Romantic Nature as a small 'r' romantic, describing 'continuing and deeply engrained modes of thought that oppose industrial society with ideas of 'nature' and 'the natural' as modes of secular redemption' (2011: 13). There is much romanticized Nature in evidence in the ethnography. Entangled and enmeshed with the physical experience of being outdoors were imagined constructions of theatrical scenery, the picturesque and the sublime, landscape painting, romanticized versions of English pastoral, and the kinds of cultivated natures that overlap with the idea of 'culture'.

As Arons and May state simply, the idea of a nature/culture binary 'has taken a beating in recent years' (2012: 1). Extreme weather, natural disasters, and global terrorism, they maintain, have forced us to re-understand the mutuality of nature and culture. But despite the existential impossibility of a nature/culture binary, Arons and May remain convinced of a strategic need to work with some sense of nature as materially different to culture in theatre and performance studies. They propose:

As difficult as it may be to talk about what nature *is*—particularly in light of the poststructuralist understanding of nature as discursively constructed—we must acknowledge and keep present the material reality of the more-than-human world if we are to find compelling ways to reframe our relationship to it. (4 [original emphasis])

¹⁰ For references to Williams' definitions of nature and culture in literature and drama contexts, see Barry 2009: 245; Clark 2011: 6; Cresswell 2004: 18-19; Egan 2006: 6-7; Szerszynski, Heim and Waterson 2003: 2; Ginn and Demeritt 2009: 301.

In calling for an emphasis on nature as ‘real’, they seem to align themselves with a ‘first-wave’ ecocriticism (Buell 2005), often characterized by the ‘reinstatement of the referent’ (Rigby 2002: 154) or the ‘reinstatement of the ‘real’” (Marland 2013: 848). Kate Soper’s now well-known retort to poststructuralist insistences on nature as discursively constructed, that ‘It isn’t language that has a hole in its ozone layer’ (1995: 151), is often brought out to counter the kinds of constructivist claims for nature that Arons and May refute.¹¹ Gabriel Egan’s *Green Shakespeares* (2006) expands upon Soper’s claim, also troubling the idea of nature as discursively constructed: ‘If everything is nature’, Egan writes, ‘then nothing is, for the word has nothing from which to distinguish itself’ (130)’. Axel Goodbody and Kate Rigby introduce *Ecocritical Theory: New European Perspectives* (2011) by citing Jonathan Bate’s frustrations with how the term was being dismantled and disregarded. Bate writes that it is ‘profoundly unhelpful to say ‘There is no nature’; at a time when our most urgent need is to address and redress the consequences of human civilization’s insatiable desire to consume the products of the earth’ (in Goodbody and Rigby 2011: 2).

Recently, however, Una Chaudhuri and Shonni Enelow’s *Research, Theatre, Climate change and the Ecocide project, a casebook* (2014) presents a corrective to Arons and May’s material nature in the context of theatre, performance, and ecology. Chaudhuri revises her prior argument that ecotheatre ought to represent ‘a turn towards the literal, a programmatic resistance to the use of nature as metaphor’ (2014: 28 [originally Chaudhuri 1994: 29])—the proposition taken up with approval by Arons and May (2012: 4)—expressing concerns that in early forms of ecotheatre, ‘the injunction to deal with ‘nature itself’ frequently led to the practice of site-specificity, or at least of outdoor theatre. Going to the park—if not to the forest—felt somehow more “ecological” than staying cooped up in the black box of theatre’ (2014: 29). With Enelow, Chaudhuri goes on to argue that:

The impulse to displace eco-performance from the cultural space of theatre into the supposedly natural space of a park reproduced a discourse that has come, eventually, to be recognized as one of the very sources of our current ecological crisis: the sentimental discourse of a romanticized nature, “capital N-nature”, constructed as the pristine opposite of culture. (2014: 29)

The argument presented here is central to the questions arising throughout my ethnography and to the way I utilise the idea of nature throughout the thesis. The claim that a sentimentalized, romanticized Nature has been extremely harmful is entirely valid. In the ethnography, I present and trouble examples of a Nature conceived and constructed in this damaging way. In Chaudhuri and Enelow’s efforts to stress the benefits of ‘research theatre’,

¹¹ Soper’s ‘ozone layer’ quip is cited in Barry 2009: 243; Bruckner 2011: 226; Clark 2011: 46; Cless 2010: 7; and Marland 2013: 848.

however, they are perhaps too quick to dismiss performance taking place outside of the theatre, continuing the trend of advancing one form as more ‘ecological’ than another. Caution need not negate the complexity of responses to work outside of the auditorium, nor what potential there might be in such work to challenge as well as to construct ideas of Nature. There is more going on—even at outdoor Shakespeares—than a wholesale appropriation of Nature for anthropocentric purposes. In my study, it has been necessary to write about things that were happening outdoors in a more-than-human world. People spoke about weather as nature and so I needed to write about weather. They spoke about trees and plants and grass as nature, about the colours of the sky and about the sea as nature, and I needed to write about these things too. They spoke about squirrels, seagulls, dolphins, swallows, gulls, gannets, and kites as nature. We might know that human behaviour is affecting the weather but we did not build the wind. We might know that human behaviour is causing the oceans to rise and filling them with plastic, but we did not make the sea. There remained a kind of nature that was identifiably more-than-human in the context of outdoor Shakespeares and so I am adopting Arons and May’s conception of ‘nature’ as material and ‘other’ throughout (2012: 4).

Most of the audience responses I am looking at typify what Soper refers to as ‘nature endorsing’ perspectives, which appeal to nature ‘in validation of that which we would either seek to preserve or seek to instigate in place of existing actuality’ and ‘may take either conservative or progressive forms’ (1994: 34). Soper sets her ‘nature endorsing’ perspective in tension with ‘nature scepticism’, which, she explains, ‘is usually advocated as progressive, but may be charged with conservatism in the free hand it gives to cultural determination’ (34). Introducing *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism* (2014), Greg Garrard posits that Soper’s ‘nature endorsing’ and ‘nature sceptical’ perspectives are now widely utilized within ecocritical discourse (2014: 8-9). One particularly nature sceptical approach might be Morton’s now prolific deconstruction of nature in *Ecology Without Nature* (2007), which declares that ‘the idea of nature is getting in the way of properly ecological forms of culture, philosophy, politics, and art’ (1). This is not because Morton is sceptical about the actuality or existence of more-than-human things but because he is suspicious of any kind of Nature full stop. For Morton, putting ‘Nature on a pedestal and admiring it from afar does for the environment what patriarchy does for the figure of a Woman’ (5).

Further variants on a ‘nature-sceptical’ approach might be found in Bruce McConachie’s point that to think about ourselves as ‘separate from nature’ and to try to ‘save the earth’ is ‘not only ridiculously arrogant and also clearly immoral’, adding, flippantly, that ‘probably the best way to save nature would be to kill off humanity’ (2012: 93). Cognitive

scientist George Lakoff sees the dangers of our thinking about ourselves as separate from nature as dangerously embedded within our linguistic frameworks. Lakoff writes that ‘we are not separate from Nature. We are an inseparable part of Nature. Yet we separate self from other, and conceptualize Nature as other. This separation is so deep in our conceptual system that we cannot simply wipe it from our brains’ (2010: 76-77). Bill McKibben’s updated edition of *The End of Nature* (2003) responds to criticisms of his 1989 edition, reflecting that ‘critics claimed that we weren’t really ‘ending’ nature because either we had been altering our surroundings for centuries, or we were a part of nature ourselves and hence couldn’t destroy it’ (2003: xiv). McKibben refutes this argument, concluding that ‘We *are* different from the rest of the natural order, for the single reason that we possess the possibility of self-restraint, of choosing some other way’ (xv-xvi). Much of the nature in this thesis was considered ‘nice’ by audience members—with the exception of certain weathers and insects discussed in Chapter Four—with all of the residual history and subsequent problems that ensue. Unsurprisingly, it is very much a ‘nature endorsing’ perspective, and sometimes even a sentimentalized, romanticized ‘Nature’, that I encounter in the ethnography.

Lastly, a brief word about how the term ‘nature’ continues to be used and adopted uncritically as an idea outside of the Humanities. In the social sciences, multiple studies continue to be less preoccupied with troubling what nature *is* and more interested in what nature *does* for physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing (Benassi and Perrin 2009; Cheng and Monroe 2010; Franz and Mayer 2004; Gibson 2010; Ryan et al. 2010; Thompson Coon et al. 2011). Similarly, government, conservation, and health and wellbeing studies tend to attend less to what makes nature than they do to recording, measuring, and protecting it (State of Nature Report 2013; Nature and WellBeing Act 2015). In these contexts, nature is presented unapologetically with its own materiality, distinct from culture: nature affects us and is something that—depending upon our cultural circumstances—we might love, fear, harm, protect, need more or need less. I mention these contexts for nature because of my ethnographic methodology. In many respects these, admittedly naive, ways of thinking about nature have an affinity with how audience members used and conceptualized the term.

Given my emphasis on ‘nature’, I occasionally ran into ‘Why *Shakespeare*?’—a culture question—as I progressed through the research. What, if anything, was particular to the *Shakespeare* bit of outdoor Shakespeares? If the environment was so important, why not go for a picnic, sit on a sea-cliff or in a field and nature-watch instead? What, if anything, did outdoor *Shakespeares* do that other outdoor forms of performance outdoors would not? These questions were best approached by trying to think about ‘culture’ in opposition to ‘nature’ and by beginning to observe convergences.

Culture

Etymologically, ‘culture’ originates in ‘cultivation’, deriving from physical work on the land and care for livestock (Williams 1976: 87).¹² This kind of culture ‘does’ something to nature, to landscape and wildlife, and the outdoor performance spaces considered in this thesis are all examples of cultured nature, whether outdoor theatres, parks, woodlands, or fields. Two further contexts for ‘culture’ are also especially relevant. The first, which clashes with the narrow and outdated construction of Nature set up above, might narrowly refer to the performance of a play by Shakespeare in an outdoor space—a cultural event. This sense of culture reflects the third modern-usage definition Williams gives it, as ‘the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity’ (1976: 90). The idea of culture as a ‘thing’—opposing the narrow understanding of nature the previous section sets up—continues to be present in the recent Warwick Commission report on ‘Cultural Value’, seeking to present ‘the actual experience of culture and the arts’ (2013: 4), working with ‘culture’ as an abstract noun, something for which there is an ‘actual’ experience. The working supposition is that culture can be investigated and analysed, just as nature can in the social sciences and government commissioned reports above.

This narrow sense of ‘culture’ also alludes to the complexity of the high/popular culture arguments within which Shakespeare has been historically aligned. In 1869, one-hundred years after David Garrick’s rained-off Shakespeare Jubilee parade in Stratford-upon-Avon conferred on Shakespeare the status of the ‘National Poet’ (Dobson 1992), Matthew Arnold infamously proclaimed ‘high culture’ as ‘the best which has been thought and said in the world’ (2006: 5) and no figure more than Shakespeare has been used to exemplify high culture since. For Susan Bennett, Shakespeare is the ‘transcendental signifier of high culture’ (1996: 35), and Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins argue that Shakespeare bears the ‘ideological weight’ of being ‘widely seen as the measure of dramatic art, the ultimate test for the would-be actor or director, the mark of audience sophistication, and the uncontested sign of ‘Culture’ itself’ (1996: 20). For Martin Ryle and Kate Soper, Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869 ‘marks the moment where ‘culture’ comes to denominate not just an inherited tradition of texts and an associated ideal of self-development, but the endeavour to make these current through education beyond a restricted leisure-class audience’ (2002:4). High

¹² Gabriel Egan’s *Green Shakespeare* (2006) observes culture’s derivation in cultivation too, writing that ‘culture’, in Raymond Williams’s first definition of the term, ‘means at its simplest the tending of growth’ (175). Charlotte Scott’s *Shakespeare’s Nature: From Cultivation to Culture* (2014) uses this etymology as the basis for her book that looks at representations of husbandry in the agrarian economy of Shakespeare’s England, in both the sonnets and the plays.

culture and Shakespeare become associated with a kind of self-improvement that cuts across social, class, and cultural boundaries. Whether or not the audience members I spoke to in summers 2013 and 2014 articulated any sense of feeling ‘cultured’ by attending the outdoor performances (and, with one exception, they did not), the unspoken equation of attending a Shakespeare with the acquisition of Pierre Bourdieu’s ‘cultural capital’ (2010) can be reasonably carried over into this context.

Such claims that Shakespeare ‘cultures’ whosoever encounters his work have been rightly criticized within cultural materialist frameworks, which, Sinfield explains, attempt both ‘to assess the modes of cultural construction that (re) produce the patterns of authority and deference in our societies (including the prestigious discourses of high culture’ and also ‘to theorise the scope for dissidence’ (1994: 260). In particular, Sinfield identifies ‘two phases’ that illustrate how Shakespeare has been put to ideological work as part of the British educational system that can be usefully mapped onto ways of looking at audiences for Shakespeare in performance too (255-256). Sinfield’s first ‘phase’ describes a time when the ‘canon was assumed to be more or less right; the task was to make it more widely accessible’ (255). The antecedents of this ‘structure of feeling’ (Williams 1977: 128) can be traced to Arnoldian assumptions that education in high culture facilitates social good, and that to get to know Shakespeare is to acquire cultural capital. The second phase Sinfield identifies reflects his own advocacy for cultural materialism, observing a shift from educators seeking to make Shakespeare widely available (Shakespeare for all!), to proactively exposing Shakespeare’s complicity in and with systems of oppression (Shakespeare the misogynist/ racist/ homophobic/ ableist!). The objective here, Sinfield writes, was ‘not to allow more people to reach the established qualities of Shakespeare but to displace or appropriate his texts in the interest of subordinated peoples’ (1994: 255). This second phase, he bluntly remarks, ‘may be galling for the beneficiaries of the first’:

If you worked hard to pass your exams, have become accustomed to the idea that your insights into Shakespearean texts justify a more affluent lifestyle than your parents had; if, further, you have been labouring conscientiously to pass on the same benefits to other suitable individuals; then you don’t want to be told that you have been collaborating in an oppressive system. (1994: 255-256)

Given Sinfield’s cultural materialist commitments, it is not surprising that he so quickly does away with his first phase with the advent of the second. Practice, of course, does not always reflect scholarship so neatly, and the actuality of the audience responses I am looking at is more processual than Sinfield’s teleological ‘phases’—broadly conceived as they are—suggest. Across the audience responses, elements of the first phase—of making Shakespeare widely accessible—were celebrated, fluctuating between ‘residual’ and ‘dominant’ cultural

processes (Williams 1977: 121-127). The strength of pro-Shakespeare feeling, of support for a transcendental genius and the elitist object of high culture, tended to be variously complicated by the practitioners' wider social objectives, by the spaces and places in which they worked, and by the wider socio-cultural and environmental contexts of the theatrical events.

The kind of culture that outdoor Shakespeares represent is further complicated by the relative low-status of this kind of performance within scholarship, which has historically taken more interest in high profile performances in mainstream theatres. Recently, though, there has been a spate of works looking to lower status Shakespeares: in Jeremy Lopez's work on Shakespeare at the Edinburgh Fringe (2004); in Purcell's work on popular performances (2009); in Dobson's work on amateur performances (2011); and, most recently, in Dan Kulmala's work on American Shakespeare Festivals (2015). Lopez looks to what is sometimes 'bad' acting and 'banal' performances of Shakespeare's plays, which, he finds, evince occasional glimpses of 'greatness' (2004: 207). For Purcell, popular Shakespeares represent 'Not just a radical alternative to high-culture Shakespeare [but] an interrelated assortment of shifts, in what the name 'Shakespeare' means to us today' (2009: 5). Kulmala's arguments are perhaps the most relevant here. He argues for the cultural value of American Shakespeare Festivals, by moving beyond what the performances say about the plays. Kulmala responds to Lopez, suggesting 'that academic discourse had not come to terms with "bad" Shakespeare because it's too closed-minded and wrapped up in maintaining its own elite status to explore options in the cultural value of alternative and community-based productions of Shakespeare' (10). If we stop looking for Shakespeare for a moment, Kulmala proposes, we might find something else happening—a kind of cultural value that might best be understood within an anthropological understanding of 'culture'. Given the ethnographic focus of my work, then, the second context for culture that I draw on is the broader anthropological understanding of the term; the 'analytic sense of 'culture'', of which high culture is just 'one set of signifying practices among others' (Dollimore and Sinfield 1994: viii).

In this thesis, Shakespeare visibly traverses multiple ideas of culture; as the subject of cultural studies approaches, a readily recognisable performance event, and a way of thinking about planned parks, gardens, umbrellas, and picnics. While 'Shakespeare' and 'theatre' as 'culture' equate to a very narrow sense of the term, this broadly reflects the ways that the audience members interviewed were thinking about the performances. The cultural event was the one of the lenses through which nature was perceived, giving rise to ornamental images of Nature—variously conceived of as theatrical scenery, as fairy tales, as

romantic picturesque, as Shakespeare's pastorals and green worlds of Arden, Athens, Bohemia, as island fantasies, and as nostalgic and nationalist landscapes. But the opposite was also the case. Nature by way of return, occasionally and variously made culture seem any combination of out of place, at home, a friend, an enemy, synthetic, organic, artificial, and irrelevant. A nature/culture binary, then, often represents audience members' modes of expression. Despite my own resistance to any such duality, I provisionally and self-consciously employ it to establish the context for a performance of a Shakespeare play in a 'natural' outdoor setting. The convergence of nature and culture, however, and the unsettling of this binary are most useful to this thesis. How does culture inflect perceptions of nature (and nature of culture)—what Clark refers to as the 'nature/culture antinomy' (2011: 93-4)? What are the ecological implications of nature framed by culture and culture perceived as natural? Questions about what Shakespeare means as Culture in cultured forms of Nature run throughout and speak back to any attempts to uphold a nature/culture binary.

Place, Space, and Site

As well as nature and culture, audience members repeatedly referenced—with different emphases and in sometimes contradictory ways—particular understandings and experiences of space and place. They talked about where they were, what it looked like there, what it felt like to be there, how human relationships affected their sense of where they were, what they thought about the physical place where the performance was presented, and how they experienced the fictitious locations represented in the play. 'Where' is therefore one of this study's key concerns. Cathy Turner observes that 'Use of the terms 'place' and 'space' lacks absolute consistency within theoretical discourse' (2004: 373), and space and place recurred in different manifestations at the forefront of audience experience. Tim Cresswell suggests that participants in ethnography are 'everyday theorists who bring their own ideas of place to bear' on the places they inhabit (2004: 79), and, in keeping with my approach to nature and culture, I attempt to use place and space as the audience members I consulted used and conceived of the terms.

When audience members referred to 'space', they tended to be speaking about the theatre structures, architectures, and environments they were in. They tended to be thinking about what physically existed when and where people were not present (but not necessarily prior to any human engagement with the land itself—cultivated fields, planted trees, built amphitheatres etc.). This kind of space is far from a debunked abstract, Euclidean space—a measureable, mappable, and knowable container—but instead incorporates what was

conceived of as separate from (but not prior to) human activity. It summons the lively space environmental phenomenologist David Abram evokes poetically when he writes:

The space between oneself and a nearby bush is hardly a void. It is thick with swirling currents, adrift with pollens and the silken threads of spiders a medium instilled with whiffs and subtle pheromones and other messages riding the unseen flows that compose the atmosphere of this breathing world. (2010: 60)

Place, then, might refer to the way audience members responded to being in a given locale at a given performance. Place for, Sally Mackey, whose research into what she terms a 'performance of place' is longstanding, is interpreted as 'a perceived environment or geographical area with which individuals (or groups) believe they have a personal relationship' (2007a: 181) and as having 'more import than material 'site' for inhabitants' (2013: 46). Yi Fu Tuan writes that 'if we think of space as that which allows movement then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place' (2003: 6). Extending Tuan's idea of the place as a pause in time, for Mackey, place can be thought of as 'a meaningful way-station, as pause, or as momentary location' (2013: 47). This temporal understanding of place accords with my ethnographic findings, where audiences might be understood as making temporary places: an audience at a performance comprises a 'pause', the pause representing a group of people watching a play by Shakespeare. Given that audiences only came together briefly, temporarily touching down in outdoor spaces, these places represented less the cozy, authentic, or romantically rooted versions of place mired in exclusive or exclusionary localism, but came closer to representing Doreen Massey's unbounded 'global sense of place' (1997), where the live theatrical events comprised a brief hiatus in audience members' fluctuations to and through places. So the pause that was the place of these outdoor Shakespeares became an '*event*, a happening not only in space but in time and history as well', to borrow from phenomenologist Edward Casey (2009: xxv [original emphasis]).

As the Methodology chapter goes on to explain in more detail, I attempt to draw out the lived, phenomenological experiences of place and space as articulated by the audience members I interviewed (Bachelard 1994; Casey 2009; Relph 1976; Tuan 1977) and, as a counter to these phenomenological understandings of space and place, I also employ ideas from a broadly Marxist lineage, which represent sometimes opposing perspectives (Harvey 2001; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1997, 2005; Soja 1996). The ethnography therefore speaks broadly across the argument summarized by Cresswell as, 'Place as 'being-in-the-world' versus place as social construct' (2004: 29). Casey sees place as an experience of 'being-in-the-world' (30), Cresswell argues, whereas David Harvey's Marxist stance considers place as

socially constructed (30). For Casey, ‘To be at all – to exist in any way – is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place’ (1998: ix), whereas Harvey’s social place is political; if place is socially constructed, then it can be changed, and any kind of environmental determinism is politically stultifying.

Casey later revises his phenomenological definition of place, still insisting that it is more than ‘just’ a social construct. In the second edition of *Getting Back into Place* (2009), he continues to decentre ‘time’ and ‘space’ as primary but expands his definition of ‘place’ to incorporate the social as ‘dimensions [...] indwelling forces that contribute to a place and its non-physical and non-geographic dimensions’ (xxv). Likewise resisting the anthropocentricity of place as an entirely social construction, Abram argues that ‘social dynamics [...] are steadily fed by the elemental energies of the realm’ (2010: 134). Place, for Abram, is made of weather too—of what is in space—as much as it is made of social processes and materialities. Mike Pearson arrives at a not dissimilar understanding of place, in which he sees being-in-the-world and social processes as simultaneous and contingent. For Pearson:

There is no privilege of origin: a place owes its character not only to the experiences it affords—as sights, sounds, etc.—but also to what is done there as looking, listening, moving. Both being and environment are mutually emergent, continuously brought into existence together. (2006: 16)

The audience members consulted as part of my ethnographic fieldwork slipped easily between speaking about what was particular to places and what they perceived as common to outdoor spaces, both supporting and challenging arguments for the social or environmental construction of either. Accordingly, the first two chapters deal with ‘places’, and the second two look at perceptions of ‘outdoor spaces’ more generally. Taking the lead from the audience responses, I use the terms place and space as they do, as sketched out above. On occasions where I use the terms differently, as Michel de Certeau does with space for place (Agnew 2011: 5), I point it out as I do.

Lastly, a word about how the word ‘site’ is being used in this thesis. Wilkie clarifies that ‘site does not operate simply as a synonym for place or space. Rather it is an idea that is often produced as a result of the performative framing of more than one place’ (Wilkie 2008: 100). None of the audience members utilized the word ‘site’ to describe where they were. When I use site, then, it is deliberately to invoke the body of writing on site-based performance and the practice created under this banner.

Environment and Ecology

The terms ‘environment’ and ‘ecology’ also need some definition here, although I return again to ‘environment’ in more detail in the Methodology chapter. For Richard Schechner, who, with Arnold Aronson, was one of the leading creators of the environmental theatre movement in the 1960s and 1970s, the idea of the environment in relation to performance is fairly straightforward. Schechner writes:

Environment can be understood in two different ways. First, there is what one can do with and in a space; secondly, there is the acceptance of a given space. In the first case, one creates an environment by transforming a space; in the second case, one negotiates with an environment, engaging in a scenic dialogue with a space. (1968: 50)

Schechner’s environment, swirling around performance, encapsulates the now-acknowledged as troubling view of an environment as something ‘around’ human performance—secondary rather than relational—either a background or something with which negotiation is possible. Lakoff, however, in the context of cognitive science and ecology, dislikes the linguistic ‘environment frame’—that is, ‘the environment as separate from, and around us’ (2010: 76)—for these very reasons, because it perpetuates the idea of humans and human performance positioned at the centre of a swirling world. Attempting to counter the defunctness of ‘environment’, David Cooper calls for the necessity of holding onto phenomenological understanding of the jaded term, arguing that ‘Everything that makes an environment special *for* a creature—from the inside, so to speak—is outside the scientific domain (1992: 171 [original emphasis]). Cooper’s ‘environment’ is compelling but necessarily local and limited to the radius within which any human or nonhuman lives and moves. ‘My environment’ is different to ‘the Environment’, though, Clark responds to Cooper (2014: 288), and Clark summarises many of the concerns around the term with the example that ‘Someone living a high-carbon lifestyle in New York or the Scottish Highlands is already lurking as a destructive interloper on the floodplains of Bangladesh’ (288). The environment I can grasp is limited to what is perceptible within the radius perceptible to me, but my actions in Exeter affect places far beyond what I can perceive from within my everyday experience. Audience members, however, frequently referred to ‘the environment’ as what surrounded them, as did I in conversation with them. ‘Environment’ therefore remains a useful term in this ethnography—despite the valid concerns around its anthropocentricity—and once again highlights the distance between critical thinking within academic discourse and everyday language usages. The Methodology chapter returns to the idea of the phenomenologically lived environment in a little more detail, but given my ethnographic emphasis, I continue to use a potentially anthropocentric ‘environment’ to

describe what surrounded audience members at a performance, welcoming the tensions that might result from this choice. With anthropologist Tim Ingold, this environment remains, 'in the first place, a world we live in and not a world we look at' (2011: 95).

It is for some of Clark's concerns around the limits of environment that Steve Bottoms, Aaron Franks, and Paula Kramer prefer the term 'ecology' in the special issue of *Performance Research* 'On Ecology' (2012). Their view is to displace the human as the centre encircled by all else and to situate performance within a wider ecosystem. They explain:

Our own choice here of the word 'Ecology', however, reflects an emergent emphasis in this *Performance Research* edition on how materiality and space are always co-implicated in making beings, things and places. In contrast, definitions of environment refer to 'surroundings', or 'external conditions', implicitly reaffirming humans as the centre of the conceptual equation. 'Environmental theatre' and site-based performance practices have sometimes framed their given surroundings as the scenic backdrop to an anthropocentric drama. Ecology, on the other hand, is by definition concerned with relationality, with networks of interdependence. (2012:1)

It is interesting to note Bottoms, Franks, and Kramer distancing 'ecological' performance from Schechner's environmental theatre and from 'site-based performance' by using some of the same criticisms that have been levelled at outdoor Shakespeares; in particular, the problematic idea that site-based performances utilise space as a 'backdrop'. Their preferred term, 'ecology', however, does not come neutrally or devoid of difficulty either. Ecology has also already been used in a number of ways in theatre and performance studies, both with meanings derived from the natural sciences—a way of describing habitats, dependencies, and interrelationships—and as a metaphor for the various relationships at work within theatre and performance. Kershaw's *Theatre Ecology*, for instance, works through ecology's etymology in the Greek 'oikos' for household and fixes on a definition of 'the inseparable and reflexive interrelational and interdependent qualities of systems *as* systems' (2007: 16 [original emphasis]). He goes on to shift between ecology as science and ecology metaphor, using both ideas interchangeably throughout the book. As they do with nature, Arons and May reject the use of ecology as a metaphor and push instead for retaining a sense of the material actuality of ecology in studies of theatre and performance (2012: 3). I recorded no instance of an audience member using the term 'ecology'. When ecology appears in my own writing, then, it is to invoke those materialities of habitat, relationality, and interdependence that are linked to the sciences.

Audience members, Spectators, or Participants

Lastly, a brief word on how I am describing the groups of people who gathered together for the performances. Jill Dolan captures the ephemerality of an audience when she refers to ‘a group of people who have elected to spend an evening or an afternoon not only with a set of performers enacting a certain narrative arc or aesthetic trajectory, but with a group of other people, sometimes familiar, sometimes strange’ (2005: 10). Purcell also emphasises the shared experience of being in an audience, describing ‘the group that gathers in time and space to experience something together’ (2013: xiv). The idea that ‘an audience’ undergoes a collective experience has been contested by those seeking to recognise individual responses within a group (still too often referred to by critics and scholars as ‘we’). Helen Freshwater warns of a ‘tendency to confuse individual and group response’ (2009: 5), arguing that ‘each audience is made up of individuals who bring their own cultural reference points, political beliefs, sexual preferences, personal histories and immediate preoccupations to their interpretation of a production’ (6). Matthew Reason reiterates this point when he reminds scholars ‘to recognise the fundamental diversity of audience responses’ (2015: 280). The argument that audiences comprise individuals is re-contested by studies undertaken using cognitive science methodologies, attempting to find commonalities across audience experience, such as Bruce McConachie’s *Engaging Audiences* (2008) and Robert Shaughnessy’s ‘In Time with Shakespeare’ project (2014). Peter Eversmann helpfully balances what he refers to as this ‘collective versus individual’ argument by suggesting that ‘while the emotional and perceptual dimensions are experienced individually, the cognitive analysis of a production is to a large extent a collective phenomenon, which may enhance the spectator’s insight in a performance through communication with other audience members’ (2004: 171).

While audiences as early-modern *hearers* of a play, Evelyn Tribble argues, have been overemphasized in historicising early modern performance as auditory rather than visual (2013: 240), ‘audience’ continues to be the preferred scholarly term.¹³ My choice of ‘audience’ and ‘audience members’ for the main body of the thesis follows that of *Participations Journal of Audience & Reception Studies*, which utilises ‘the term ‘audience’ [...] as widely as possible, and with no intended theoretical attachments’ (Participations 2014). As before, any choice of term is complicated by the ethnographic encounters, as people referred to themselves as ‘audience members’, ‘spectators’, and even ‘participants’ interchangeably. In sticking with ‘audience’, I follow the lead of much of the extant research into audiences for Shakespeare,

¹³ For early modern audience members as ‘hearers’ of performance, see Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ickikawa (2000: 18).

even while it debates what is at stake with these terms (Purcell 2013; Sauter 2010; Tulloch 2005; Woods 2012). This is not to deny the nuances between hearing, seeing, and participating, although Taking Flight's *As You Like It*, discussed in Chapter Two, with its focus on making performance accessible, perhaps challenges the sensory exclusivity of *any* of the three terms: 'audience', 'spectator', and 'participant'.

Chapter Breakdown

The Literature Review that comes next identifies and outlines the existing scholarship that this project draws from. The Methodology chapter then shows how audience research became a means to answer the research questions, and the following four case study chapters are separated into two parts.

Part One, consisting of Chapters One and Two, looks at performances in their specific settings, identifying what was unique to particular places of performance. Chapter One analyses audience responses at two outdoor theatres, built in nature, for Shakespeare; Minack on the coast of Cornwall and the Willow Globe in mid-Wales. These outdoor theatres present examples of performances where the audience remained seated for the performance's duration. Although the Shakespeares presented at Minack and the Willow Globe made only superficial references to the places in which they were performed, I discover that audiences responded to place as much as to the performances in describing their experiences. Place always remained a little in excess of Shakespeare at these theatres.

Chapter Two presents an analysis of three productions by three different theatre companies, each consciously attempting to 'collaborate' with space, gesturing towards site-specific practices by bringing their audiences on promenade journeys around the parks in which they performed. I find that what resulted were ahistorical experiences of Shakespeare in the woods; a performed enactment of Catherine Belsey's argument for the fairy tales of the oral tradition as some of Shakespeare's source material (2007), and a 'writing-over' of the parks' spatial and temporal histories. Across all three productions, clusters of trees stood in for fairy tale-woods and audience members, unprompted, spoke of feeling as though they were 'participating' in the performances. The more practitioners attempted to 'collaborate' with space, the more audiences responded to the plays rather than the places, raising questions about what 'collaborating with space' actually achieves, especially when the collaboration serves the performances primarily. Even here, however, the trees always retained a little of their independence, remaining a little in excess of the performances. Part One concludes with the observation that outdoor theatre that is not designed to interact with

its environment potentially reveals as much about that environment as performance that sets out to work with place.

Part Two, encompassing Chapters Three and Four, looks at the themes arising across the range of interviews and recurring across all of the case studies. Certain responses were common to all of the performances and recurred across all of the contexts. No matter where they were, or what performances accomplished aesthetically, audience members made multiple and multifarious references to wildlife, light and darkness, landscape, and weather. Obviously, the specifics of these references varied between places, but they also pointed more generally towards the affective capacities of nature, sometimes romantically, sentimentally conceived of as Nature, but also at least a little alive in its own right.

Chapter Three begins by looking at the ways in which nature's effects—across all of the outdoor spaces—were dissimilar to the 'aleatoric' effects produced by chance intrusions from nature that Penelope Woods identifies at Shakespeare's Globe (2012: 246). Taking up themes concerning wildlife and light particularly, it argues that audiences responded to 'affective atmospheres' arising from perceived intrusions from, interactions with, and sharing the space with birds, animals, and light and darkness at these performances (Anderson 2009; Böhme 1993; Ingold 2011; McCormack 2013). Lastly, Chapter Four develops the investigation of 'affect', moving tentatively towards an ecopolitics of the audience responses. It builds on the previous chapter to consider themes arising in relation to weather and landscape, identifying instances of 'ecophobia' (Estok 2011) and 'enchantment' (Bennett 2001) within audience responses. By considering the kind of 'enchantment' that Jane Bennett proposes might help to foster a more ecologically generous ethic, and positioning this enchantment within Kate Soper's 'alternative hedonist' frameworks of consumption and citizenship (2008; 2009; 2011; 2012), I ask what (limited) potential there might be in the experience of outdoor Shakespeares for contributing to the kind of ethical generosity necessary for less ecologically destructive forms of consumption. I argue that, despite their inherent anthropocentricity, the cultural impositions of performance upon these outdoor spaces also occasionally fostered 'enchanted' experiences for audience members.

Conclusion

This thesis is not a study of Shakespeare's plays in performance nor an inquiry into what certain outdoor settings do for the texts themselves. My aim has not been to discover anything new about the plays, but to emphasise how audiences responded to different kinds of performance in varied outdoor locations. Neither is this a cultural study of outdoor Shakespeares, although questions around the cultural position of Shakespeare and the reified

nature of his work cannot but be part of the observations. Also, while I contextualise the case studies within a wider context of contemporary Shakespeares, I am not thinking about their original early modern contexts, except to observe how much the ‘original’ context brings about a performance of nostalgia in the present. I make no attempt to verify contemporary spectatorship against records of audiences from the early modern period, to substantiate claims against authentic early modern performances, or to decide whether or not there might be any truth in audiences’ tentative suggestions that the present performance conditions parallel those of ‘Shakespeare’s day’.

In light of my aim to show some of the range and diversity of performances and spaces, the case studies include a spectrum of the available work, including mostly professional, but also some amateur performances. The case studies therefore represent varied contexts and evince varying qualities, levels of experience, and expertise. It has never been my intention to undertake evaluative performance analysis, to offer judgement on the ‘quality’ of the productions or to assess practitioners’ abilities and the aesthetic outcomes. I limit my own performance analysis to illustrative examples where necessary, but aim to allow audience members to critique the performances on their own terms if they wish to do so. The project is also limited by its British geography, although there are significant socio-cultural differences between the places I look at: Merthyr Tydfil in Wales, Barking in southeast London, and Ripley in North Yorkshire, for instance, all represent considerably different social and economic circumstances, topographies, and environmental conditions.

These outdoor Shakespeares are just a beginning of a need to reconsider all forms of performance taking place outdoors. Outdoor Shakespeares are a useful starting place because the contrast between what might be considered to be ‘culture’ positioned in ‘nature’ is so strikingly present. What I provide is a way of thinking about one form of theatre outdoors that might be usefully extended to further forms of outdoor performance, beginning to identify cultural differences in how ‘outdoors’ is understood and constructed too. There is very much a need to bring together the many forms of performance that share ‘outdoors’ as their performance space, I think, before thinking about the ways that these performances orient themselves in relation to space, about the proxemic actor/ audience relationships they set up, or about whatever politics underpins their intentions. Such thinking would not just take performance that happens ‘outside a theatre building’ (Wrights & Sites 2001: n.p.), but all forms of performance taking place outdoors, in weather, and would begin to pull apart how the responses they bring about are culturally as well as environmentally determined. This might mean thinking about certain environmental, site-specific, street arts, live art, and immersive performances together, prioritising their happening in weather before other

spatial or aesthetic configurations—even as what it is that constitutes ‘outdoors’ feels more unsettled, unsettling, and unstable. The ethnography is led by the humans in the audiences to more-than-human and nonhuman spaces and places, only to return to articulating it all through the voices of humans.

Literature Review

As my study focuses on the reception of performances taking place during 2013 and 2014, most of the literature cited here comes from secondary sources, while the primary material comes from ethnographic fieldwork, the methodology for which is outlined in the next chapter. The first section of this Literature Review brings together those limited texts that specifically address outdoor Shakespeares at venues other than the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe in London, many of which have already been mentioned in the Introduction. Although there is not insignificant overlap between the practices at Shakespeare's Globe and the smaller-scale performances of my study, that theatre's architecture carries a unique set of spatial, historical, and contextual conditions, which tend to drive the analysis of the outdoor nature of the space. Rather than thinking about my case studies as lesser offshoots of a Shakespeare's Globe experience, I want to position them as branching out in their own right, and for this reason I attend to the literature that considers Shakespeare's Globe separately in the later section on heritage performance and early modern theatre reconstructions. After looking at the body of work directly concerning outdoor Shakespeares, I go on to address the relevant scholarship on site-specific theatre and performance; the field of theatre/ performance and ecology; its counterpart in literary ecocriticism, and Shakespearean ecocriticism in particular; and selected relevant literature on heritage performance and reconstructed early modern theatre practices. Finally, I return to the increasingly substantive body of work on audiences for Shakespeare, honing in on empirical studies of Shakespeare audiences, qualitative research methods and methodologies, which leads into my own Methodology section.

Outdoor Shakespeares

As outlined in the Introduction, Rosemary Gaby's *Open Air Shakespeare: Under Australian Skies* (2014), Michael Dobson's chapter on 'Shakespeare in the open: outdoor performance' in *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance* (2011: 152-196), and Stephen Purcell's *Popular Shakespeare* (2009) are the only books engaging with contemporary outdoor Shakespeares in settings other than the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe. Gaby, Dobson and Purcell work on Australian, amateur, and popular performance respectively and Gaby's is the first book-length study to seriously acknowledge the effects that space, place, and nature must have on outdoor Shakespeares in performance. Gaby's book builds on an earlier article about Australian theatre company Ozact, 'Taking the Bard to the Bush' (2011) for *Shakespeare Journal*, where she introduces some of the ideas around site-specificity and Shakespeare in outdoor settings that are expanded upon in her monograph. Her observation

that Ozact's use of the term 'environmental [...] neatly invokes both their connections with the natural environment and their deployment of environmental theatre techniques' (72) points towards the overlap between questions of environment and site-specificity, that I address from an audience member's perspective.

Dobson's work on outdoor Shakespeares also has an earlier iteration in Peter Holland's *Shakespeare, Memory and Performance* (2006), in a chapter titled 'Shakespeare exposed: outdoor performance and ideology, 1880-1940' (256-280). Throughout his sustained inquiry into Shakespeare and amateur performance, Dobson uses archival research to construct his socio-cultural history of the practice. As well as looking at private theatricals in aristocratic gardens, Ben Greet's late-Victorian outdoor performances, and the events leading to the opening of the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park in 1932, Dobson constructs a history of Rowena Cade's Minack Theatre in Cornwall, England, founded in the same year (2011: 162). By concluding, however, that outdoor Shakespeares today represent 'a globally recognizable, incipiently Luddite, perennially amateurish, deeply parochial Englishness' (196), Dobson summarises some of the perceived problems with the practice, which, he argues, suggest some of the reasons they have received little prior scholarly regard.

Like Gaby and Dobson, Purcell's *Popular Shakespeare* (2009) also builds on an earlier article, 'A Shared Experience: Shakespeare and popular theatre' (2005). In his 2009 monograph, Purcell continues to explore what might be meant by a 'popular' Shakespeare today, investigating performance styles, approaches to the text, performance spaces and audiences. He conceives of a popular audience as one 'which derives not from material fact, but rather from the perceived relationship between actor, play, and spectator—and crucially, between spectator and spectator' (143). Expanding upon this relationship between performance and audience, and the relationships between audience members themselves, I turn my attention to relationships between audience, performance, and outdoor spaces and to what this does to the experience of a 'popular' form of Shakespeare. As artistic director for theatre company The Pantaloons, who often perform outdoors, Purcell is predisposed towards referencing outdoor performance, and he frequently draws illustrative examples from this kind of practice (although his own practice is not cited within his scholarship). Chapters on popular audiences (142-171) and popular performance spaces (174-205)—topics developed further in Purcell's more recent *Shakespeare and Audience* (2013), to which the section on audiences returns—provide context for the performances I am looking at; I cite Purcell's work throughout the four chapters.

As well as Gaby's, Dobson's and Purcell's work, there are a few further references to outdoor Shakespeares contained within other scholarly texts that highlight the gap my project attempts to fill. Before Dobson, Arnold Aronson describes Louis N. Parker's historical pageants at the start of the twentieth century—most famously epitomized in 1911 at Sherborne Abbey, Dorset—but Aronson's focus on scenography leads him to more spatially-oriented questions than those asked by Dobson. Parker, Aronson elaborates, 'chose his sites with great care' and felt that a pageant should be 'acted in some beautiful and historical spot, which is left without any artificial embellishment whatever' (Parker in Aronson 1981: 32). For Aronson, however, 'If such pageants [as Parker's] were environmental at all it was because of their incorporation of the natural scenery into the production on an emotional if not necessarily physical level' (32). While Aronson does not go on to interrogate these 'emotional' and 'physical' levels as produced by the pageants' natural scenography, or make any further reference to spectatorship, he alludes obliquely to an experience that might warrant more consideration. Aronson also looks at Max Reinhardt's *The Merchant of Venice* presented at the Campo San Trovaso, Venice in 1934, querying the aesthetic qualities of a performance that was both 'environmental' in terms of its spatial construction and in terms of its thematic resonance with the outdoor location depicted in Shakespeare's play (37-38).

David Conville's *The Park: The story of the Open-Air Theatre, Regent's Park* (2007) is a fusion of historical research, anecdote, and memoir, recalling the theatre's history from its founding year to 2006. Conville's enthusiasm for the theatre and the language he uses to describe it—as 'Eccentric, imaginative, unpredictable, magical, chilly and enjoyable' (124)—support my argument for the potential of looking at the phenomenological experience of environment and weather at outdoor Shakespeares. In a similar vein, Livia Segurado Nunes's MA thesis, 'Back to the roots: Shakespeare and Popular Culture in the 20th and 21st centuries' (2013), speculates that 'the attraction of outdoor theatre may also have to do with a dormant or perhaps powerful desire on the part of the audience to reconnect with nature' (129).¹⁴ Although Nunes does not expand upon this idea in relation to contemporary spectatorship, her suggestion that audiences might desire nature as much as Shakespeare reinforces my claim for the experiential scope of this inquiry.

Joe Falocco too hints at the phenomenology of outdoor Shakespeares today in his book on *Reimagining Shakespeare's Playhouse: Early Modern Staging Conventions in the twentieth century* (2010), bridging past, present, space, nature, and performance, but without exploring these

¹⁴ Nunes' MA thesis was winner of the Prix du mémoire de la Société Française Shakespeare in 2013, hence its being publically and easily available within the public domain.

in detail. He charts the historical attempts undertaken by William Poel, Harley Granville Barker, Nugent Monck, Tyrone Guthrie, and Shakespeare's Globe to reconstruct 'authentic' Elizabethan practices, positing that 'Rather than indulging in archaism for its own sake, they looked backward in a progressive attempt to address the challenges of the twentieth century' (1). Falocco alludes to contemporary outdoor Shakespeares latterly when he suggests:

Whether they choose to perform against an existing architectural backdrop or to construct their own set, practitioners interested in Elizabethan staging should consider working in the open air. *Al fresco* performance provides something of the connection to the natural world experience in early modern amphitheaters. (2010: 175)

What Falocco means by a 'natural world experience' is not developed any further, but again he points to the potential of an experiential inquiry.

Lastly, Russell West's *Spatial Representations and the Jacobean Stage* (2002) begins with personal anecdotes of attending a medieval mystery play outdoors in Compiègne, France and a visit to Shakespeare's Globe. West explains that for him, 'the tangible sense of the spatial dynamics of performance in such an outdoor setting made a deep impression' (1). He describes these as 'epiphanic experiences' (3), sparking his interest in historical representations of space in Jacobean theatre that sustain his booklong study. West does not return to outdoor space or to contemporary performance, but resounding within this anecdotal beginning is the idea that outdoor space stimulates a profound response that deserves attention. Common across all of the examples in this section, then, is the outdoor environment, which consistently causes profound personal experiences and generates memories. My research draws on this previous, if limited, scholarship on outdoor Shakespeares taking place in outdoor spaces other than at Shakespeare's Globe, following the hints towards the experiential potentialities of this practice. My work differs from all of the above examples in that I take the lived experience of the theatrical events as articulated by audience members in the outdoor environment as my main subject.

Site-Specific performance

Writing on site-specific performance—and, more recently, writing on site-specific *theatre*—is often interdisciplinary and has engaged with subjects as diverse as anthropology, archaeology, heritage, geography, philosophy, environment, and countryside management. Significant contributions to the field of site-specific performance come from Una Chaudhuri (1995); Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks (2001); Nick Kaye (2000); Fiona Wilkie (2002; 2008; 2012); Miwon Kwon (2004); Cathy Turner (2004); Exeter-based *Wrights & Sites*, made up of Stephen Hodge, Simon Persighetti, Phil Smith, and Turner (2006); Gay McAuley

(2007); Pearson (2006; 2010); D.J. Hopkins, Shelley Orr, and Kim Solga (2009); Dee Heddon, Carl Lavery, and Smith with Roberta Mock (2009); Nicholas Whybrow (2010); Hodge and Turner (2012); Anna Birch and Joanne Tompkins (2012); Laura Levin (2014); and Vicky Hunter (2015); as well as a special issue of *Research in Drama Education* on 'On Site and Place' (2007) edited by Sally Mackey and Nicholas Whybrow, and a special issue of *Contemporary Theatre Review* on 'Site-specificity and Mobility' (2012) edited by Birch.

Wilkie's much-cited 'Mapping the Terrain: a Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain' (2002) provides a useful but not definitive overview of site-specific theatre at the start of the twenty-first century. Wilkie's findings are based on a survey of forty-four practitioners; some defining their work as site-specific and others demonstrating characteristics of site-specific performance in their practices, if not actually describing their work as such (141). Her article is exploratory and identifies as many questions as it answers but, in a later chapter on 'The Production of 'Site': Site Specific Theatre' for *Contemporary British and Irish Drama* (2008: 87-106), Wilkie presents a more nuanced definition of site-specificity, to which Chapter Two returns:

Simply put, site-specific theatre privileges place. It suggests that the act of dividing the activity labelled 'theatre'; from the building labelled 'theatre' holds possibilities for responding to and interrogating a range of current spatial concerns, and for investigating the spatial dimension of contemporary identities (personal, communal, national and international). (2008: 89)

In this chapter Wilkie also identifies some of the issues arising from the proliferation of productions being referred to as 'site-specific', citing Guardian critic Michael Billington's warning that site-specificity is in danger of becoming a 'gimmick' or a 'bourgeois game for those bored with conventional theatre' (Billington in Wilkie 2008: 88). These are accusations that could be justly levelled at the outdoor Shakespeares I am looking at and yet, as Chapter Two goes on to show, the effects of even dubiously site-specific performances on the people who attend them are more complex than any outright dismissal suggests.

As well as the sophisticated manner in which Pearson engages with lived experience in his writing, he is also one of the most prolific practitioners making site-specific work. His scholarship is rooted in his own practice, much of which takes place in Wales (for instance, *Coriolan/us* with Michael Brookes, mentioned in the Introduction), while Pearson's Englishness continues to influence how he thinks about the work that he makes (Turner 2004: 374). It is in *Theatre/ Archaeology* (2001), co-written with Michael Shanks, that Pearson presents Cliff McLucas's now well-known and much-used idea of a 'host, ghost and witness'

(37) to describe a trinity of space, performance, and audience.¹⁵ With Shanks, Pearson observes that at site ‘traces of other usages are apparent occasioning a creative friction between the past and present and drawing attention to the temporality of place’ (111). They choose ‘friction’ to describe the disjunctive relationship between what ‘is *of* the place and what is brought *to* the place’ (111 [original emphasis]), setting up a framework that, while transferrable to *any* study of performance and place, is especially useful in light of my objective to think about the places of outdoor Shakespeares and how they interact with the audiences brought ‘to’ the spaces, as much as the performances. Despite *Theatre/ Archaeology’s* ‘explicit interest in devised performance, physical theatre, site-specific work and performance art—those genres where dramatic literature does not necessarily play a central organising role’ (XIII), which amounts to a setting aside of the dramatic text in favour of devised performance, many of the ideas Pearson and Shanks put forward are nonetheless applicable to my project.¹⁶ While it would not be a stretch to apply the metaphor of archaeology to treatments of Shakespearean texts—as artefacts from the past excavated for contemporary interests—Pearson and Shanks’s ideas around performance and site, as much as those around text and site, feed into my work.

Pearson’s *Site-Specific Performance* (2010) offers one of the most recent and comprehensive explorations of site-specific performance in book-length form. He begins with the proposition ‘that the conventions and techniques of the auditorium may be inappropriate or inadequate to the task of addressing ‘site’ where traces of the past are liable to ‘leak, spill and diffuse into performance’ (1). Pearson goes on to provide a summary of the literature concerning site-specific performance to 2010, tracing developments in the field since the beginning of the twenty-first century (10-16) and he lists ‘provisional distinctions’ between performance in an ‘auditorium’ and performance at ‘site’ in opposing columns (16-17). Given ‘provisionally’, Pearson’s columns provoke a dismantling as much as they cement any easy distinctions between what is and isn’t site-specific. He sets up the auditorium as ‘cloistered’, ‘stable’, and, ‘dark and quiet’ (16) as opposed to site, where ‘bounds and perimeters may be extant or installed’, where ‘environmental conditions may change and need to be accepted or actively countered’, and which is ‘only dark or quiet if chosen for such qualities or rendered so’ (16). Pearson carries on, but these initial conditions that he

¹⁵ For examples of McLucas’s ‘ghosting’ used in relation to site-specific performance, see Kaye 2000: 5; Turner 2004: 373; and Wilkie 2008: 93.

¹⁶ Brith Gof’s *Gododdin*, performed at a disused car factory in 1988, was inspired by if not ‘organized around’ a piece of literature, a medieval Welsh poem. Pearson’s more recent work on Greek Tragedy *The Persians* sees him working with dramatic literary texts to create site-specific performance, indicating that the presence or absence of a literary text is not a determinant of the form.

describes at ‘site’ are similar to those that can be found at outdoor Shakespeares. The performance spaces of my study therefore simultaneously affirm and trouble distinctions on both sides of Pearson’s diagram, attesting to the provisionality of any attempts to define the parameters of site-specificity.

Distinguishing between site-specific ‘performance’ and ‘theatre’, Birch and Tompkins’s edited collection on *Performing Site-Specific Theatre* (2012) represents a welcome contribution to the field. The book’s focus on theatre means that it often discusses site-based enactments of literary texts. The collected chapters variously adapt and challenge diverse methodologies and conceptual approaches taken from prior work on site-specific performance. Jane Collins’s analysis of a ‘promenade, site-specific’ production of *The Duchess of Malfi*, for instance, at the Grand Central Hotel in Brighton (54-68), and Pearson’s chapter on his National Theatre Wales’ production of Greek tragedy *The Persians*, created for an army training village in the Brecon Beacon mountains (69-83), both work with questions around bringing a classical text to site. Collins finds that the ‘distance between the canonical text and the embodied present is collapsed by the ‘play’ of the actors in combination with the architectonic features of the site’ in her indoor production of John Webster’s play (60). Pearson observes how weather influences both the aesthetics and reception of *The Persians*, recalling the effects produced by distributing matching raincoats to audience members:

While the ponchos gave a collective identity to audiences – the more so in adverse conditions – they ensured individual security against wind and rain. With an option to withdraw exposed elements of the performance back into the house, weather became a potentially active component of spectatorship: most strikingly in views riven by diagonals of heavy rain, or partly obscured by intervening moorland mist. (2012: 82)

Here, as with the outdoor Shakespeare examples presented above, the weather at Pearson’s site-based performance brings about some of its most profound effects. Billington’s Guardian review of Pearson’s *The Persians* also reinforces the profound effects of the weather at this production, writing that ‘The combination of the story and the setting, with the sun slowly disappearing over the hills, is overwhelming’ (2010).

Unlike Gaby, Dobson, and Purcell, for whom the phenomenological is significant but does not receive the foremost focus, literature on site-specific theatre and performance has more often—though not always—pursued phenomenology as a key concern. Cathy Turner’s ‘Palimpsest or Potential Space: Finding a vocabulary for site-specific performance’ (2004) calls for ‘greater emphasis on phenomenological experience’ (379), among other things, and she repeats this commitment to lived experience in a chapter co-written with Stephen Hodge on ‘Site: Between Ground and Groundlessness’ in *Histories and Practices of Live*

Art (2012). Accepting that the ‘simple word, ‘site’ remains ‘contentious’ (91), Hodge and Turner propose thinking about site-specificity,

as a way of turning our attention to the relationship between performance and its geography, focusing on work that places this relationship at the centre of its concerns, usually, though not exclusively, through some degree of phenomenological engagement with site. (2012: 94)

Such commitment to phenomenological engagement with site reverberates throughout Pearson’s work on site-specific performance. Pearson’s *In Comes I: Performance Memory and Landscape* (2006) takes the form of what he calls a ‘mystory’, a blend of the ‘personal, popular and expert’ (9) and is deeply committed to the importance of lived experience in its layered approach to performance and site.

There are a few incursions into studies of Shakespeare and site-specific performance that need brief mention in this section too, as they anticipate some of the concerns of my study. Sarah Dustagheer’s article, ‘Shakespeare and the Spatial Turn’ (2013) highlights how historicist studies of Shakespeare have responded to the spatial turn within the context of the early modern period. Escolme’s article on ‘Shakespeare, Rehearsal and the site-specific’ (2012) for *Shakespeare Bulletin* does not work with examples of outdoor Shakespeares specifically, but, with Gaby’s work on Australian performances, it is one of the first articles straddling both Shakespeare studies and site-specific performance. Escolme compares relationships between site and performance in three productions of *Coriolanus*, citing Pearson and Shanks (2001), Wilkie (2002), and Turner (2004) to frame her argument, integrating spatial theory from Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau into her performance analysis. Escolme argues that, given Shakespeare’s writing for the performance conditions at the Globe, this theatre was originally, and the existing reconstruction continues to be, a ‘place for site-specific theatre’ (2012: 507). She posits that even if these productions are not site-specific in the purest sense of the term, they produce effects that are more than just ‘site-sympathetic’ when rehearsal processes begin with the question ‘what does it mean if I say it *here?*’ rather than ‘what does my character mean when she says this?’ (521 [original emphasis]). Despite Escolme’s assertion that space neither ‘infect or inflects’ (505) outdoor Shakespeares in the same way that it does site-specific performances, her article is a useful precedent for looking at questions of Shakespeare and site-specificity together.

Lastly, some of Robert Shaughnessy’s work also responds to the ‘spatial turn’ as it has been brought to bear on Shakespeare studies. In a chapter ‘On Location’ for *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* (2005: 79-100), Shaughnessy also employs a de Certeaudian framework, taking a panoptic view of the cities below, to investigate how

the theatre spaces of Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford (RST) produce certain kinds of audience-performer relationship. Shaughnessy suggests that despite their contrasting audience-stage configurations and the corresponding audience-stage interactions they encourage, the architectures of Shakespeare's Globe and the RST 'represent the most visible, if not the most typical, manifestation of twenty-first-century English theatrical Shakespeare' (99). But what is most visible depends upon who is looking, and where they are looking. The outdoor Shakespeares 'on location' at the Botanic Gardens, Glasgow and Ludlow Castle, Shropshire, for instance, that Shaughnessy mentions briefly at the start of the chapter, are closer to the kinds of performance spaces I am looking at (79). In a later article on 'Immersive Performance, Shakespeare's Globe and the "Emancipated Spectator"' (2012), Shaughnessy proposes a 'radical site-specificity' (n.p.) at Shakespeare's Globe, a form of site-specificity that brings about 'emancipating' audience-performance interactions, after Jacques Rancière's *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009). Although Shaughnessy's claims are arguably overstated, they echo Escolme's argument for Shakespeare's Globe as a 'place for site-specific performance' (Escolme 2012: 507). Whether or not Shaughnessy demonstrates the same kind of sensitivity to site that Pearson's work shows, he demonstrates a will to think about contemporary performances of Shakespeare in relation to space and place, and particularly to outdoor space, making an evocative list of the birds that fly over Shakespeare's Globe: 'the feathered friends and fiends of Shakespeare's play—sparrows, eagles, ravens, owls, falcons, crows, rooks, magpies, wrens, geese, chickens, kites, and temple-haunting martlets—and the prosaic, temporary denizens of the Globe itself, its pigeons, its martins, and its sparrows' (2012: n.p.).

For all the claims, then, that the term 'site-specific' has been debased through mis/overuse (Billington in Wilke 2008: 88; Smith 2013: 113; Ferdman 2013: 5), the kinds of conversations that site-specific performance practices have generated in Shakespeare studies cannot be unwelcome. These conversations need more nuance and depth to articulate the specificity of existing and emerging performance practices, but the foundations are there and subsequent conversations may continue to open up questions and challenge assumptions around politics, form and content of such seemingly disparate practices as they do.¹⁷

¹⁷ Christian Billing and Bridget Escolme's planned seminar group for Shakespeare Association of America's 2016 meeting on 'Scenographic Shakespeares: Site, Space, and Shakespeare' demonstrates this growing interest in the area of space, place, and site-specificity in contemporary studies of Shakespeare in performance and will likely bring about further work (SAA online 2015).

Theatre, performance, and ecology

Given the attention that scholars and practitioners working on site-specific performance have long paid to questions of space, place, and environment—in their social and nonhuman guises—and the increasing visibility of evidence confirming anthropogenic climate change, many of those working on site-specific performance have organically migrated towards work on theatre, performance, and ecology as it has emerged in the last decades of the twentieth century. Individuals such as Wendy Arons, Steve Bottoms, Una Chaudhuri, Minty Donald, Dee Heddon, Wallace Heim, Stephen Hodge, Baz Kershaw, Carl Lavery, Theresa May, Sally Mackey, Karen O'Brien, Mike Pearson, and Lisa Woynarski now inhabit this fast flourishing field, bringing diverse methodologies and wide-ranging readings of old and new practices to bear on their work.

As I pointed out in the Introduction, Erika Munk's introduction to the special issue of *Theater* including Chaudhuri's article 'There Must be a Lot of Fish in that Lake' (1994) is often cited as the first call to scholarly interest in theatre, performance, and ecology, although Woynarski points out that Lynn Jacobson's article 'Green Theatre: Confessions of an Ecoreporter' in 1992 precedes Chaudhuri's work (Woynarski 2015a: 4-5). Since 1994, concurrent with intensifying conversations on climate change and environmental degradation, books such as Bonnie Marranca's *Ecologies of Theater* (1996), Chaudhuri and Elinor Fuchs's *Land/Scape/ Theater* (2002), Wallace Heim, Bronislaw Szerszynski, and Claire Waterton's *Nature Performed* (2003), Gabriella Giannachi and Nigel Stewart's *Performing Nature* (2005), Kershaw's *Theatre Ecology* (2007), and Downing Cless's *Ecology and Environment in European Drama* (2010) provide diverse but sporadic contributions to an emergent field. Some of these works and the practices they consider are brought together in the introductory sections of Kershaw's *Theatre Ecology* (2007: 26-30) and Cless's *Ecology and Environment in European Drama* (2010: 8-12), although, in a review of Kershaw's book for *Modern Drama*, Theresa May criticises Kershaw's failure to reference some of the work carried out in the field by American scholars at the time of writing (2009: 248). Kershaw's book shifts between using ecology as metaphor and as actuality in an eclectic mix of chapters. His call for 'unruly audiences' whose members might refuse to applaud represents an interesting amalgam of audience response framed within 'theatre ecology', where 'ecology' is very much metaphorical, if the metaphor feels a little stretched at times (2007: 187). Nonetheless, Kershaw's work is one of the first to confront ideas of performance, climate change, and ecology and, perhaps, his attention to what seem at times to be dizzyingly diverse forms of performance—some of which directly address ecological issues and some of which do not—is what has come to be missing from subsequent studies of theatre and ecology. What does

theatre and performance that is not explicitly addressing ecological concerns tell us about our relationship with them? After all, more than a group of committed progressive performance-makers are implicated and needed to bring about any kind of collective change.

Theatre, performance, and ecology begins to cohere as a sub-field around 2012 with the publication of Arons and May's collection *Readings in Performance and Ecology* (2012), a special issue of *Performance Research* 'On Ecology' (2012), and another on 'Environmentalism' for *Research in Drama Education* (2012). Cross-pollination between work in the U.S.A. and the U.K. is at this juncture more widespread than before and Kershaw has a chapter in Arons and May's 2012 collection (2012: 59-76). Heim concludes *Readings in Performance and Ecology* by suggesting that the collection contains responses that are 'redeeming', 'pathological', and 'quick' (211), and by anticipating further 'theorizing that not only makes explicit how performance and theater create particular modes of ecological knowledge and what this knowledge means, but that activates the interchange of this knowledge across disciplines and practices' (211-212). In writing an ethnography of responses to a practice that tends not to be considered 'ecological', I aim to answer Heim's request for interchange and interdisciplinarity.

But although Arons and May have reasonable grounds to argue that in 2012 'as a scholarly and artistic community we have largely failed to rise to Una Chaudhuri's [1994] challenge' (2012: 2), and Steve Bottoms has grounds to lament the lack of interest from the discipline of drama more broadly in 2013 (Woynarski 2015a: 8), such arguments potentially undervalue the care to the more-than-human world that has long been central to writing on site-specific performance, even where this work does not confront ecological concerns head-on, and despite Chaudhuri and Enelow's criticisms of site-based work as inherently un-ecological (2014: 29). The AHRC Reflecting on Environmental Change through Site-Based Performance project (2014), of which Bottoms is principal investigator, does seem to integrate some of the work on site, ecology, and performance organically. Heddon and Mackey point out that the theatre and performance practices addressing environmental concerns already exist, it is just that scholarship has been slow to pick up on it (2012: 187). Woynarski's 'Brief Introduction to the field of Performance and Ecology' (2015a) provides the most recent survey of this still-emergent but fast growing field and a special issue 'On Anthropomorphism' (2015) for *Performance Research* and another on 'Performing Ecos' (2015) for *Performing Ethos: An International Journal of Ethics in Theatre and Performance* suggest that questions around theatre and ecology are becoming less peripheral. To date, there are few postcolonial studies of theatre, performance, and ecology, with Birgit Däwes and Marc Maufort's edited collection on *Enacting Nature: Ecocritical Perspectives on Indigenous Performance*

(2014) an exception. At the time of writing, Lisa Woynarski, Karen O'Brien, and Courtney Ryan—co-convenors of the ASTR Performance in/and/of Ecology working group—are working on a second volume of *Readings in Performance and Ecology* that will address some of the perceived holes of the first volume. The collection will focus on 'urgency and eco-theatre and performance in the age of the Anthropocene; eco-materialisms, including the agency of/in material formation; postcolonial eco-theatre; and environmental justice and activism' (Woynarski 2015b).¹⁸

Chaudhuri and Enelow's *Research, Theatre, Climate change and the Ecocide project, a casebook* (2014) represents a significant shift. The Ecocide Project and *Carla and Lewis*—the playtext presented as part of the casebook—represent thoughtful and reflexive research theatre, with doubtless value in light of its authors' expertise, research objectives, and the considered application of Timothy Morton's 'queer ecology' to their performance practices (30). Chaudhuri and Enelow explain their approach to this project:

Rather than simply refusing the difference between inside and outside and collapsing the two, we wanted to preserve that difference but treat it as a point of departure for a dynamically interpenetrating world in which the matter inside the black-box of theatre is as alive, as lively (or as "vibrant", to invoke Jane Bennett's important theory) as the matter in a forest or a field. (2014: 29-30)

The performances this thesis looks at have yet to be considered within *any* form of ecological argument, except where the impulse is to dismiss their romanticising of nature outright and to move on to other forms of ecotheatre. This is neither to deny the sophistication of The Ecocide Project's approach, nor the potential resourcism of Shakespeare performed in outdoor spaces—appropriating landscape for scenery—but it seems unhelpful to dismiss outdoor performances as 'un-ecological' and the root of the problem, however problematic they might well be, without looking more carefully at what might stem from these already well-tended roots.

Shakespeare and Ecocriticism

While the field of theatre, performance, and ecology has roots, albeit sometimes underappreciated roots, in site-specific performance, it has also lagged somewhat behind literary ecocriticism. As Arons and May observe, studies of performance and ecology have been slow to follow literature (2012: 3). Since the Association for Studies in Literature and Environment (ASLE) was founded in 1992, its journal *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and*

¹⁸ The Anthropocene is the not uncontroversial term first utilized by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer in *New Scientist* (2000) that describes a new geological era where humans are considered to exert the most significant geological force upon the earth.

Environment (ISLE) in 1993, its British and Irish counterpart journal *Green Letters* in 2000, and Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm's *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) introduced ecocriticism simply as 'the study of the relationship between literature and the environment' (xviii), ecocriticism has gradually become mainstream in many University English departments, spawning multiple accessible introductions to the subject. Lawrence Buell's *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (2005); Ursula Heise's 'The Hitchhikers Guide to Ecocriticism' (2006); Peter Barry's section on 'Ecocriticism' in *Beginning Theory* (2009: 239-260); Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom* (2011); and Timothy Clark's *A Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* (2011) provide diverse and overlapping entries into ecocritical approaches. Pippa Marland, who imagines scope for ecocriticism beyond literature, offers perhaps the most suitable description of ecocriticism in my context, describing 'approaches that explore the representation in literature (and other cultural forms) of the relationship between the human and the non-human, largely from the perspective of anxieties around humanity's destructive impact on the biosphere' (2013: 846).

Much early literary ecocriticism focussed on the American Transcendentalists—Emerson, Leopold, Muir, Thoreau—and on the Romantics in Britain—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelly, Keats—and early ecocriticism has worked hard to cut a different path to the 'nature writing' of old. Early 'first wave', unapologetically presentist stances were criticized for being undertheorized (Barry 2009: 243; Heise 2006: 505; Marland, 2013: 848), but, answering such criticisms, an array of theoretical work incorporating new materialism, deconstruction, and ecophenomenology has addressed this perceived lack. Morton's *Ecology without Nature* (2007); Alex Goodbody and Kate Rigby's edited collection *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches* (2011); Simon Estok's *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia* (2012); *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism* (2014) edited by Garrard; and Clark's *Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept* (2015) among others, all offer pithy and thoughtful responses to a perceived lack of ecocritical theory.

Shakespearean ecocriticism—another offshoot of literary ecocriticism—has produced parallel studies mostly concerned with textual readings of Shakespeare's and other early modern plays, presenting great ambition for the potential of this new area of scholarship to effect positive change. Jonathan Bate's 'ecopoetic' analysis of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in *The Song of the Earth* (2000) is cited as 'the first sustained treatment of Shakespeare in ecocriticism' (Garrard in Brayton and Bruckner 2011: xix). Bate concludes optimistically that 'poetry is the place where we can save the earth' (2000: 283), although he has been called out for 'immodesty' since (Soper 2011: 23). An *ISLE* Special Cluster issue on 'Shakespeare and Ecocriticism' (2005) precedes Gabriel Egan's *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism*

(2006) and Robert Watson's *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the late Renaissance* (2006)—both works of Shakespearean ecocriticism published in the same year. Egan's now widely criticized book picks out some captivating coincidences and anecdotes that take on new meanings in a twenty-first century context, such as the presence of polar bears and little ice-age in early modern London. He provokes:

A number of seemingly naive old ideas about our relations with the natural world—for example, that the Earth itself is alive and that what we do can change the weather—have turned out to be true. The plays cannot answer our questions about how to prevent ecological disaster, any more than 30 years ago could they answer feminists' questions about how to fight sexism and undermine patriarchy. But, then as now, the plays are useful (and indeed infinitely pleasing) as interrogations of our ideas about our relations to one another and to the world around us. As such they help us think clearly about what is at stake in those relations. To that extent, Shakespeare is indeed already Green. (2006: 4)

Despite criticisms that the book is undercooked, Egan's writing has prompted numerous and diverse responses, firmly establishing Shakespearean ecocriticism as a legitimate area of study.¹⁹ If Shakespeare wasn't already green, he is now dressed in many verdant shades. Watson's more applauded historicist work expresses reservations about the place of historically minded ecocriticism within the academy, but still hopes that 'If we can understand how some people came to care, in politically and intellectually responsible ways, about present and future life on this planet as a collectivity, we can hope to expand the ecologically minded community and its wisdom' (2006: 5). Sharon O'Dair's 'The State of the Green: A Review Essay on Shakespearean Ecocriticism' (2008a) provides an overview of the existing literature concerning Shakespeare and ecocriticism, but despite her call for 'Slow Shakespeare' (2008b) as the best way for Shakespearean ecocritics, torn between theory and activism, to make a contribution to the future of the planet, ecocritical studies of Shakespeare have proliferated. O'Dair's hope for ecocritical Shakespeares is, that 'we have in the recent past subverted cultural structures of decency about the meanings of race, gender, and sexuality; and perhaps, facing catastrophe, we can do so once again' (2008b: 24).

Of the most recent Shakespearean ecocriticism, Simon Estok's monograph *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia* (2012) and Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton's edited collection *Ecocritical Shakespeare* (2011), to which Egan, Estok, Watson, and O'Dair also contribute, marks a coming-together of much of this body of work. For Estok, whose 'ecophobia' I draw on in Chapter Four, Shakespearean ecocriticism offers considerable hope.

¹⁹ For criticisms of Gabriel Egan's *Green Shakespeare* see Simon Estok (Progress Report 2012: 48 and 50-51) and Terry Gifford's *ISLE* review (2006: 272-273). Gifford cuts that 'Many ecocritics might have thought they would like to write a book of this title someday. Well, there is still time, if not a title' (272).

It ‘forces us’, Estok argues, ‘in some ways back to the radical possibilities with which the embryonic ecocriticism all began and gives us new insights and perspectives on a dramatist who indeed had a lot to say about the natural world’ (2012: 17). Echoing Estok’s, Egan’s, Watson’s, and O’Dair’s expressions of hope, Garrard argues ambitiously in the forward to *Ecocritical Shakespeare* (2011) that ‘Shakespearean ecocriticism has the potential to enthuse us with the comic spirit of ambivalence, adaptation, and resilience that might, if we are at once pretty lucky, extremely clever and reasonably good, help found a sustainable culture’ (xxiv). Brayton and Bruckner’s Introduction to the same work begins with the remarkable anecdote of Eugene Schieffelin’s first bringing starlings to America in the late 1800s (because starlings are referenced in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV, Part One* and Schieffelin wanted to bring all of ‘Shakespeare’s birds’ to America) where they prospered and multiplied, inhabiting the skies in huge black clouds, harmfully and irrevocably altering the landscape (1-2). This anecdote leads into the remainder of the book with the hope that ecocritical scholars’ ‘invasive stamp [on Shakespeare’s plays] may also carry a real benefit for the health of the planet’ (9). Two of the questions Bruckner and Brayton ask; ‘What does the study of literature have to do with the environment? Can reading, writing about and teaching Shakespeare contribute to the health of the planet?’ (2), tellingly keep this Shakespeare bounded within the discipline of English and miss much of what Drama might bring to ecocritical Shakespeares (indicative perhaps of the still peripheral status of drama and performance within Shakespeare studies and the legacy of Shakespeare’s belonging to a tradition of great ‘literature’ and not drama). Within the chapter contributions to *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, however, there are occasional hints at the overlooked potential of performance. Bruckner, writing on ‘Teaching Shakespeare in the Ecotone’ (223-237) brings her undergraduate class to an outdoor production of *Cymbeline*, where she observes some wildness within a manicured park and tensions between urban and ‘natural’ landscapes. Richard Kerridge concludes his chapter on ‘An Ecocritic’s *Macbeth*’ (193-210) by desiring a production that might realise his ecocritical reading of the play (210).

With the exceptions of Downing Cless’s writing on his own ‘eco-directed’ productions of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *The Tempest* (2012: 91-118), and David Hartwig’s thesis on ‘The Place of Shakespeare: Performing *King Lear* and *The Tempest* in an Endangered World’ (2010), which uses ‘ecopoetic analysis’ (4) to look at indoor performances and film adaptations of the plays in his title, there are no ecocritical readings of Shakespeare in performance and none at all that look at performances of Shakespeare outdoors. In the epilogue to his recent *Shakespeare and Ecology* (2015), which also focuses on literature, Randall Martin identifies this gap, arguing that ‘Shakespeare’s greatest possibilities for becoming our eco-contemporary, however, arguably lie not in academic discourse but in

performance' (167). If Shakespearean ecocriticism to date has been largely concerned with re-readings of texts rather than with readings of performances, more performance analysis is sure soon to follow.

Reconstructions, Original Practices, and Heritage

There is a body of writing on early modern theatre and heritage reconstructions that I want to allude to briefly here because it pertains to the uses of cherished artefacts from the past in the present in a way that helps shed light on some of what is going on at contemporary outdoor Shakespeares. Shakespeare has long been considered part of a national heritage and more recently part of a global one, exemplified by the World Shakespeare Festival in 2012. Robert Sarlòs identifies two approaches to early modern performance reconstructions; the practices of “third Globe’-ers [who] are so intent on specific dimensions that they lose sight of the spirit [of the originals]’ as distinct from practitioners ‘seeking latter-day equivalents rather than reconstructions’ (1989: 203). I mentioned John Russell Brown’s proposition in the Introduction, that looking to work from Bread and Puppet Theatre and Welfare State International might help retrieve the ‘spirit’ of the original Elizabethan theatrical event (2002: 11-18). Traces of conversations around the search for either the ‘dimensions’ or the ‘spirit’ of Shakespearean original echo throughout the conversations with audience members presented in the four chapters. Literature that looks at early modern theatre conventions and stagecraft within their historical contexts is therefore only peripherally relevant to this research insofar as audience members alluded to conversations arising from historical research that have made their way into public consciousness.

Scholarship on the history of early modern performance and stagecraft (Weimann 1978; Dessen 1984; Thomson 1992, 2000; Gurr and Ichikawa 2000; Gurr 2004a, 2004b, 2009; Falocco 2010; Lin 2012) and research arising from work undertaken at Shakespeare’s Globe (Kiernan 1999; Carson and Karim-Cooper 2008; Woods 2012), accompanies much of the practical work in performance reconstruction there, as does the field of ‘original practices’—especially under Mark Rylance’s term as artistic director—the American Shakespeare Center, and Patrick Tucker’s Original Shakespeare Company, which operated between 1991 and 2000 (Stern 2000, 2009; Tucker 2002; Weingust 2006; Palfrey and Stern 2010).²⁰ ‘Original practices’ exemplifies a deeply historicist approach, usually undertaken with

²⁰ Outdoor playhouses received considerable attention in the wake of the opening of the reconstructed Shakespeare’s Globe’s in 1997. The opening of the indoor Sam Wanamaker Theatre in 2014 has signalled a shift of emphasis onto indoor rather than outdoor practices at this institution for the time being. See, for instance, Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper’s *Moving Shakespeare Indoors* (2014).

a view to uncovering information about the plays as they might have been first performed and representing them in their 'original' conditions. Many of the outdoor Shakespeare companies I have looked at variously allude to the idea of 'Shakespeare as it would have been done', picking and choosing which performance conventions suit their contemporary purposes, and vague references to the body of work on early modern theatre reconstructions subsequently seep through into the utterances of the audience members responding to the performances.

Shakespeare's Globe particularly has been the target of widespread criticisms of 'Disneyfied' heritage, stagey re-enactment, and theme park status (Bennett 1996:34-35; Drakakis 1988; Worthen 2003:93-97). W.B. Worthen's condemnation that 'the Globe most resembles theme parks in what it sells: a mediated experience of the past in the present' (2003:6) succinctly summarises many of these concerns. In *Theatre/ Archaeology* (2001), also cited above as part of the literature on site-specific performance, Michael Shanks polemicizes against both the idea of an institutionalized heritage and the idea of heritage 'in' and 'as' performance:

Defined generally as inherited cultural material and goods, the word always has connotations of conservative political and cultural agendas, nostalgic, consoling and reactionary programmes of the conservation and promotion of a high cultural canon. Heritage: great achievements bequeathed to us from the past, central to our identity, often nationalist identity, as members of worthy nation-states and educated social classes. But the term is also used in a more neutral sense: archaeological heritage management in the UK is the close equivalent of cultural resource management in the U.S. (2001: XVI)

Certainly Shanks could be describing Shakespeare when he targets 'great achievements bequeathed to us from the past', with all of the problems that ensue. Responding to Shanks, Laurajane Smith theorises his concerns within a framework she calls the 'Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD)':

The AHD emphasises the materiality and innate value of heritage, and stresses the monumental and grand, national narratives and values, as well as the comfortable and the 'good'. It asserts the legitimacy of expertise to work as stewards of the past, protecting historical fabric for the edification of present and future generations. (2011: 71)

Heritage seems to suggest blue plaques, brown National Trust motorway signposts, landscaped gardens, paintings, grand staircases, fudge, Kendal mint cake, tearooms, cucumber sandwiches, and all of the expressions of a 'fanciful or nostalgic utopia' (Smith 2013: 103) that can be most regressively associated with outdoor Shakespeares. *Performing Heritage* (2011), to which Smith also contributes, presents a collection of essays arising from

a Performing, Learning, and Heritage research project jointly funded by the AHRC and Manchester University (2005-2008). Smith compares visitors' responses to an English country house and to a working class mining museum. Museum visitors, she theorises, 'do' heritage as they negotiate being present, engaging with, and responding to a constructed heritage experience (69-71). Although Smith is looking at particular forms of indoor and interpretative museum-theatre, her frameworks and the presentation of her own qualitative, ethnographic audience research, as well as many of the questions she encounters provide parallel stories in heritage studies that resonate with my study of audiences for Shakespeare outdoors. None of the chapters in *Performing Heritage* concerns Shakespeare, but the frameworks and methodologies they present and the questions they raise are equally applicable to contemporary outdoor Shakespeares.

Audience research and Shakespeare

Susan Bennett's *Theatre Audiences* (1997) was, until relatively recently, the most widely-cited in-depth study of theatre audiences, and her theoretical framework for thinking about 'inner' and 'outer' performance frames remains one of the most-used in reception studies (145). Bennett's work, however, arises out of reception studies and reader response theory rather than empirical audience research and therefore 'devotes little space to the particularities of an individual spectator's response to seeing a play and prefers to concentrate on the cultural conditions that make theatre and an audience member's experience of it possible' (vii). I agree with Bennett that cultural conditions always condition responses, but argue that this need not negate the need to listen to responses from 'real' audience members. In *Theatre and Audience* (2009), Helen Freshwater brings together the range of extant research on theatre audiences, provoking that 'we have yet to step up to the challenge of addressing the questions of what we really know about what theatre does for those who witness, watch or participate' (74). Introducing Freshwater's book, Lois Weaver remarks that 'real' audience experiences remain a mystery unless, simply, 'someone bothers to ask: What did you make of that?' (xi). Weaver encourages, 'Go on, ask' (xi). Without evidence, a gulf remains between what practitioners think performance might do for its audiences and what performance actually does for those who encounter it. Josephine Machon, for instance, speculates about the lasting effects of immersive performance on its audiences, writing of a 'life beyond, or lasting ephemerality [that] exists in an individual's embodied memory of the piece' (2013: 97). I agree with Machon regarding the 'effects' of the outdoor environment but argue that more evidence is needed to support and nuance these claims. How to ask, of course, is not quite so simple.

Until recently, the lived experience of audience members was considered too difficult to capture, too time consuming, too costly, or too much in the domain of social scientists for theatre scholars to explore (Balme 2008; Fearon 2010:121; Freshwater 2009:36-37; Purcell 2013; Sauter 2002, 2010; Reason 2004, 2010). The prohibitive costs of ethnographic research and the perceived methodological limitations on the theatre researcher were given to account for the paucity of qualitative research into theatre audiences.²¹ Of the audience research that existed, most was quantitative, reporting on demographics for arts funders, participation, and marketing strategies. In the short years since Freshwater and Weaver urged us to ask, however, more and more scholars have turned their attention to theatre audiences. In the Introduction I alluded to a recent coming together of interest in empirical research into theatre audiences and a growing body of work on audiences for Shakespeare particularly, exemplified by the seminar group convened by Penelope Woods on ‘The Shakespeare Audience’ at the 2015 meeting of Shakespeare Association of America, and by the publication of Stephen Purcell’s *Shakespeare and Audience* (2013).²² In *Shakespeare and Audience* (2013) Purcell summarises theoretical approaches to analysing reception derived from semiotics, cultural studies, and phenomenology, observing that while often out of view, ‘theatre studies has a long, if undervalued, history of empirical audience research’ (55). He charts the development of empirical audience research methodologies and identifies important pieces of work that are not included in Freshwater’s introductory book, noting ‘renewed drive in the discipline to investigate the responses of actual audiences rather than speculate on their behalf’ (60). Purcell compiles one of the most extensive and up to date literature reviews on research into audiences for Shakespeare—and indeed on research into theatre audiences more generally—in chapters on ‘Making Sense of the Stage’ (27-42) and ‘Agency, Community and Modern Theatre Practice’ (43-61). He chooses to look at questions of contemporary spectatorship, as I do, while also acknowledging the corresponding research into historical audiences in their early modern contexts (65).²³ He also explains that his analyses

should not be read as attempts to uncover something permanent about the effects of Shakespeare’s plays in performance, but rather as an exploration of some of the

²¹ For observations that ethnographic research into theatre audiences has lagged behind ethnographic research into television and film audiences particularly see Fearon (2010:119), Freshwater (2009:11), and Purcell (2013:55).

²² Members of ‘The Shakespeare Audience’ seminar group, convened by Penelope Woods in 2015, include David Amelang, Mark G. Aune, Henry Bell, Valerie M. Fazel, Jennifer Low, John Mitchell, Simon Smith, Deb Streusand, Olga L. Valbuena, and myself.

²³ Some examples of research into early modern audiences include Jeremy Lopez’s *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (2002) and Jennifer Low and Nova Myhill’s edited collection on *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642* (2011).

meanings that audiences and theatre productions have produced in dialogue with those texts in particular circumstances. (2013:73)

Purcell considers ‘whether certain aspects of the spectator's experience are at risk of being neglected when the semiotic/cultural studies paradigm is adopted as a matter of routine’ (36) and goes on to write about embodied responses to immersive performance. Even if claims for audience agency, autonomy, and power are overstated in relation to immersive practices, Purcell argues that this does not undermine claims for the visceral responses audiences experience at these events (139). It is his own personal and embodied response to performance, however, rather than reports from others that he draws on to make this case. I am not looking at immersive theatre particularly, but it is useful to notice a rise of interest in a multi-sensory response to Shakespeare in performance and to see the crossover of concerns shared between both kinds of practice. Some of my findings identify visceral audience experiences at outdoor Shakespeares, despite these performances not being expressly designed to elicit this kind of response.

Purcell's is a useful complement to Freshwater's overview, and he presents a comprehensive summary of gathering momentum in studies of ‘actual’ theatre audiences, as well as identifying pockets of research that are particular to audiences for Shakespeare (54-61). Purcell cites John Tulloch (2005), Willmar Sauter (2010), and Penelope Woods (2012), and their respective research into twenty-first century Shakespeare-specific audiences. Tulloch's *Shakespeare and Chekhov in Production and Reception* (2005) consists of ethnography of Shakespeare audiences at indoor performances and Tulloch's media studies perspective on reception makes this book unique (and perhaps undervalued and underused). Sauter's empirical research into audiences generally and more recently into audiences for Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (2010) presents consistent and compelling evidence for increased anti-Semitism in certain audience members after performances of this play. Woods, whose thesis pre-empts much of Purcell's work, joins him in a back-and-forth ‘debate’ in the final chapter of *Shakespeare and Audience* after they both observe secondary school audiences at Propeller's *Henry V* (2013: 157-172).

What does not make it into Purcell's review of the literature on audience research is an AHRC network led by the British Theatre Consortium made up of David Edgar, Janelle Reinelt, Dan Rebellato, Chris Megson, and Julie Wilkinson investigating Theatre Spectatorship and Value Attribution, for which they conducted written post-show surveys and follow-up telephone interviews at the Young Vic, Plymouth Drum, and Royal Shakespeare Theatre (Edgar et al. 2014). This Theatre Spectatorship and Value Attribution project asks what kind of value audience members place on theatre and attempts to identify

any longitudinal effects of performance; the ways that audience members might continue to process memories of theatre months after it has taken place. The performances surveyed as part of this study include two of Shakespeare's plays at the Royal Shakespeare Company, *Twelfth Night* (2012, dir. David Farr) and *Hamlet* (2013, dir. David Farr), although the published findings do not differentiate between responses to Shakespeare and other forms of performance. Neither does Purcell include Rebecca Scollen's article 'Does the Shakespeare in the Shakespeare in the Park matter?' (2011) in his book, which is based on audience research undertaken at the University of Southern Queensland's Shakespeare in the Park Festival. Scollen uses data from written questionnaires, finding that Shakespeare is incidental to at least two-thirds of the audience members surveyed (9). She reiterates Gaby's prior assertion that 'A significant part of the attraction of the Shakespeare Festival is the opportunity it provides to engage culturally with local space' (Gaby 2007: 175). For the regular festival-goers Scollen researches, the location is the most significant reason for attending Shakespeare (2011: 10).

Reflecting on 'Thirty years of reception studies: Empirical, Methodological and Theoretical Advances' (2010), Sauter identifies three 'personal desiderata' for future empirical audience research arising from his own work at the Drottningholm Court Theatre (2010: 260). Future focuses, Sauter proposes, might usefully address; 'The significance of the place, the collectivity of the experience, and the extension to media' (260). While none of the companies whose work I encountered made use of multimedia effects in their outdoor performances, the first two of Sauter's 'desiderata' are particularly important in my writing. He acknowledges that 'many intelligent books have been written about the importance of place and space—such as by Marvin Carlson (1989) and by Gay McAuley (1999)—but these thoughts have not entered empirical studies of audiences' (2010: 260). Though not directly referencing Sauter, a few further studies of audiences, space, place, and Shakespeare have been undertaken since 2010: Woods's thesis at Shakespeare's Globe' (2012) records the significance of Shakespeare's Globe as a place for its audiences; Purcell alludes to place affecting audience experience in his observations of audiences at Tim Crouch's *I Malvolio* at four different venues in 2011—one of which is outdoors at Latitude Festival (2013:10-12); and Sarah Werner's chapter on 'Audiences' in *Shakespeare and the Making of Theatre* (2012), concerns her experiences of theatre spaces affecting her response to performances of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Winter's Tale* (170-171).

As well as empirical research into contemporary audiences for Shakespeares, further literature touching on audiences for outdoor Shakespeares is also peripherally relevant to this thesis. Paul Prescott's chapter on 'Inheriting the Globe: The Reception of Shakespearean

Space and Audience in Contemporary Reviewing' for *A Companion to Shakespeare in Performance* (2005: 360-375) analyses representations of 'outdoor' audiences in theatre reviews, identifying many descriptions of audiences in reviews of Shakespeare's Globe productions and considerably fewer at the Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park. Prescott observes that 'what is striking about Regent's Park reviews in relation to those of Globe productions is the *absence* of the open-air audience' (363 [original emphasis]). Prescott finds that the reconstructed theatre space anticipates a certain type of (sometimes forced) participatory audience behaviour, which prompts a certain kind of condescension from reviewers. Where reviews for the Open Air Theatre at Regent's Park do mention audiences, Prescott finds, they tend to be contemptuous too. He cites a *Time Out* review stating that "Shakespeare' at Regent's Park is secondary to the availability of 'alfresco Pimms'" (363). Prescott usefully responds that 'Although Pimms is hardly the opiate of choice for the masses, these comments are consonant with the strain of Globe criticism that accuses productions of pandering to a lowest-common-denominator, culturally impoverished audience' (363).

Also underway at the time of my writing this thesis is Shaughnessy's In Time with Shakespeare research at the Centre for Cognition, Kinesthetics, and Performance at the University of Kent, which uses cognitive science and theories of 'entrainment' to investigate collective audience responses at Shakespeare's Globe (In Time with Shakespeare 2014); Malcolm Cocks' postdoctoral research with audiences for Shakespeare's Globe's *Hamlet* world tour (Globe to Globe *Hamlet* 2015); and Paul Edmondson and Prescott's Shakespeare on the Road project, visiting North American Shakespeare Festivals (Shakespeare on the Road 2014). Shaughnessy, Cocks, Edmondson, and Prescott have yet to produce publications arising from these pieces of work, but if their respective project blogs and twitter feeds are anything to go by, then weather and nature will feature in any forthcoming writing. There are, as yet, no ethnographic studies of audiences for outdoor Shakespeares in the U.K. at venues other than Shakespeare's Globe and no ethnographic studies of audiences for Shakespeares at all that think in terms of ecocritical frameworks. In the following section, I continue to draw from the literature on audience research to demonstrate the development of my own methods and methodology.

Methodology

Given so many reductive assertions that outdoor Shakespeares are indifferent to space, place, and environment, I wanted to query the extent to which audience responses might unsettle and disrupt some of the current assumptions about the practice. The research questions pointed towards a qualitative ethnographic methodology, because of my decision to work with contemporary performance and choice to consult audience members rather than to attempt to speak on their behalf. In the early stages of developing my methodology I came across Penelope Woods's doctoral thesis on *Globe Audiences: Spectatorship and Reconstruction at Shakespeare's Globe* (2012). Woods's sought to 'enable audiences to offer up their own accounts of performance' and to recognise 'the diversity of that response and feeling' (28). She tested ways of obtaining audience feedback using a combination of semi-structured face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and long-table discussions, recording spoken accounts rather than seeking written feedback in survey form or gathering statistical demographic information. With a small team of colleagues, she conducted informal, semi-structured interviews before and after performances at Shakespeare's Globe. The interviews were audio-recorded and orthographically transcribed prior to her undertaking an 'inductive' and 'non-positivist' analysis, which formed the basis of her thesis (39). Non-positivism, sometimes known as 'post-positivism' or 'new ethnography', is the term given to an approach to critical ethnography, where the world, the ethnographic other, is no longer considered objectively knowable and where direct experience is no longer considered obtainable. D. Soyini Madison describes the tenets of such a non-positivist approach as 'the recognition and contemplation of subjective human experience, contingencies of truth claims, value-laden inquiry, and local knowledge and vernacular expressions' (2005: 12).

Like Woods's, my research cannot but be 'methodologically exploratory' (2012: 25). I opted, after Woods, to gather verbal responses rather than to seek written feedback. But although her work has been invaluable, what she did at Shakespeare's Globe would not have worked at the performances I attended, and there are key differences between our approaches, arising from our research questions and the contexts in which we worked. Firstly, the purpose of Woods's thesis was to understand the nature of spectatorship at one unique theatre, whereas my research questions are explicitly around space, place, and environment. I frequently return to questions of spectatorship within this thesis, but the relationship between environment, audience, and performance is at the heart of my research rather than the nature of spectatorship for Shakespeare. Secondly, Shakespeare's Globe part-funded and fully supported Woods's research. She was unquestionably an insider at that theatre with access to audiences granted prior to commencing the study, although she too

underwent rigorous University ethics processes which restricted some of the work (47). My process was facilitated by cooperation from the theatre companies and venues at which I worked, but I was in no way affiliated with, working for, or collaborating with them. Although Woods refers to ‘sensory ethnography’ briefly in her work at Shakespeare’s Globe (54), then, my audience research necessitated a different kind of engagement with ethnographic methodologies, as this chapter discusses.²⁴ Further departures from Woods and the emergence of my own ethnographic methodology are highlighted as I work through the chapter.

Environmental ethnography

Paul Willis and Mats Trondman describe ethnography as ‘a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms the irreducibility of human experience’ (2002: 394). My process aligns with Willis and Trondman’s description of ethnography insofar as I made direct social contact, observing and interacting with multiple individuals at outdoor Shakespeare performances and analysing these encounters. Where my work diverges from their definition is in the idea of ethnographic research taking place in the field over a sustained time period. The nature of researching audiences does not allow for a sustained observation of any one group of people. The ‘transitive’ nature of theatre events, Peter Eversmann notices, influences the kinds of conclusions a researcher can draw from face-to-face audience research (2004: 141), and audiences comprise particular groupings of individuals congregating for the duration of one performance only. Each audience is unique and there is no way of dwelling longer with any given audience. The insistence that the detail can only be accumulated through sustained engagement with the field therefore presents a challenge to any idea of audience ethnography, unless what is meant by the ‘field’ is imagined differently.

Shaun Moores, working on television audiences, helpfully distinguishes between ethnography and qualitative audience research in the social sciences, describing key differences in the modes of contact the researcher has, and acknowledges that they have, with the researched. For Moores, ‘reception studies can still properly be called ethnographies’ (1993: 4). He makes the important distinction between a qualitative researcher in the social sciences attempting to identify recurring patterns from a set number of recorded interviews,

²⁴ Woods refers to her audience research at Shakespeare’s Globe as ‘sensory ethnography’ (2012: 54) and hers is the only work of its kind in studies of audiences of Shakespeare to date. Her focus on the senses allows her to consider, for instance, the increased propensity to audience fainting in response to Lucy Bailey’s production of *Macbeth* (254).

objectively, without having actually spent any time in the field, and the physical locatedness of the ethnographer in the field, a description of which must make its way into a reflexive writing process (4). Although *all* live theatre arguably happens in circumstances that are ‘for one night only’, at the outdoor performances I studied there was a palpable sense that the composite of live performance, landscape, and weather could not and would not be replicable elsewhere or on another occasion. My findings show that the transitory nature of the outdoor theatre events, particularly events taking place in a certain set of unrepeatable weather circumstances, made their reception all the more seeming-ephemeral, intensifying the desire to hold onto what happened by chance and what would be so soon gone.

As my goals were to identify local as well as cross-cutting themes, I needed to move between spaces and contexts. For the duration of the fieldwork I had sustained engagement with the conceptual field, while the actual fields (and the grass on them, air around them, and audiences in them) were constantly changing. You can’t sit in the same audience twice. If the conceptual field of research was ephemeral and comprised short bursts of activity at any given performance, my own engagement with the field was of longer duration; I sustained contact by sustaining engagement with ‘audiences’ for outdoor Shakespeares. If the audience gatherings were as short-lived as an encounter with a performance—no performance lasted more than a few hours, meaning that my window of opportunity for speaking to audience members was smaller still—my time among audiences was lengthier, extending over two summers, both now past events. The relationships I developed with the theatre companies, venues, and practitioners were sustained over this period. Social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, also allowed me to sustain contact with the theatre companies after the performances and from my base in Exeter.

Human geographers have called for a kind of ethnography that engages with *all* of the senses, rather than one that privileges the visual (Crang 2003; Patterson 2009; Pink 2009). Mike Crang, in particular, calls for ‘haptic ethnographies’ that pay attention to the ‘felt, touched and embodied constitution of knowledge’ (2003: 502). In *Fieldwork for Human Geography* (2012), Richard Phillip and Jennifer Johns collate some of the arguments for a more sensory-aware fieldwork process, outlining aspirations for more methodologically exploratory work in this area:

If sounds and smells have been relatively neglected in student fieldwork and more generally in geographical research this is doubly true of the other sense, touch and taste, where empirical research falls behind theoretical assertions about the importance of this subject material [...]. Picking up on Mike Crang's point that qualitative methods 'often derided for being somehow soft and 'touchy-feely' have in fact been rather limited in touching and feeling. (2012: 134-135)

An environmental ethnography, then, might extend the idea of a sensory ethnography, in that while attempting to be attuned to all of the senses, it might also be attentive to everything around the human subjects. In an argument that runs through much of anthropologist Tim Ingold's work, he posits that

because we generally think and write indoors, the world we describe in our writing is one that has been imaginatively remodelling *as if* it were already set up within an enclosed, interior space. In this *as if* world, populated only by people and objects, those fluxes of the medium that we experience as wind and rain, sunshine and mist, frost and snow, and so on, are simply inconceivable. This, I believe, accounts for their absence from practically all discussions concerning the relations between human beings and the material world. (2007: 32 [original emphasis])

Ingold's 'weather-world' emphasises both the material environment that can be seen and touched—flora, fauna, terrain, buildings etc.—and the idea of 'co-mingling' with 'the fluxes of the medium: in sunshine, rain and wind' (2007: 3). Pursuing Ingold's argument that 'it is one thing to think *about* land and weather and another to think *in* them' (2007:29 [original emphasis]), all of my fieldwork was conducted outdoors. While the methodological decision to work outdoors posed practical challenges in terms of navigating weather and wind (I sadly lost an early batch of Minack interview recordings to wind noise), it was not insignificant that weather interrupted, disrupted, and interfered with the process.

Mapping the practice

Next, I outline the stages of conducting the ethnography, carried out over two consecutive summers, in 2013 and 2014. I began by mapping the field, tentatively forming relationships with individuals and organisations, carried out the first year's fieldwork, and moved onto an analysis of that first summer's 'data', identifying and reading theory that spoke to the emerging themes. In response to the first summer's fieldwork, I refocused and narrowed my objectives, began the process of writing, and carried out a second summer's fieldwork, which I then analysed along with the first year's work and put together in the chapters that form the main body of this thesis. During the fieldwork, I encountered four key issues, endemic to ethnography, which James Spickard and J. Shawn Landres summarise as: 'the problem of subjectivity; the insider/outsider problem; the question of researcher identity; and issues of power' (2002: 5), and which I discuss in this chapter.

To begin with, I surveyed the range of outdoor performances in the U.K., scoping the range of work, the companies making the work, the spaces in which they were working, and the practical approaches to space they employed. The lines between professional and amateur are notoriously fluid within outdoor Shakespeares. Dobson argues that the history

of the form is one where ‘commercial and non-professional open-air productions are inextricably bound together’ (163). He refers to Minack, for instance, as ‘the very shrine of amateur theatre’ (155), although Shakespeare’s Globe tour professionally to Minack as do other professional theatre companies, and some working on a profit-share basis.²⁵ Shakespeare’s plays cost nothing in the way of royalties to perform and outdoor rehearsal and performance space are usually free of charge, often attracting graduate theatre students. Besides multitudinous amateur performances of Shakespeare in outdoor settings, any kind of taxonomy of professional outdoor Shakespeares would at best contain tenuous categorizations. Indeed, the world map of outdoor theatres produced by the Institute of Outdoor Drama at East Carolina University highlights the challenges of attempting to ‘map’ this kind of work, making no distinctions between different kinds of outdoor theatre and performance spaces, professional or amateur performances in the U.K. (IOD 2015). There are small touring companies that visit National Trust and English Heritage properties, public parks, private gardens, and outdoor amphitheatres, performing mostly once before moving (by van or by bicycle) to the next venue.²⁶ Many exist only for a few years, hinting at the challenges of successive wet summers, rising fuel costs, and the sheer stamina, enthusiasm, and perseverance required for such a rigorous schedule as reasons for faltering. Many also produce work in indoor theatres and found spaces during the winter, as well as running education and corporate training departments year-round. Few receive public funding.

Then there are productions specially produced at purpose-built amphitheatres. In the U.K., the most well-known of these are the reconstructed Shakespeare’s Globe and the Open Air Theatre at Regent’s Park, both in London. Shakespeare’s Globe has also programmed an outdoor tour since 2007, sharing performance spaces on the heritage circuit with the smaller-scale touring companies who once monopolized this kind of work. Although founded as an open-air *Shakespeare* company, at the Open Air Theatre at Regent’s Park between 2008 and 2014 Shakespeare was relegated to daytime reimaginations for children. There was no Shakespeare at all in Regent’s Park’s 2015 season, which instead featured adaptations of classic plays, stories, and musicals. 2016 will see the return of Shakespeare with *Henry V*, the

²⁵ In 2010, U.K. Actors Equity published guidelines for outdoor touring, recognising the many outdoor theatre companies who market their work as professional, but are unable to pay full Equity wages, but whose casts and crew still wish for their work to be referred to as ‘professional’ (Equity 2010: 3). Although the Equity guidelines represent a positive step towards acknowledging this form of work, they seek a National minimum wage and not full Equity minimum fees.

²⁶ The Handlebards, a touring outdoor Shakespeare company consisting of four male actors ‘in the spirit of Shakespeare’s original productions’, travel between venues by bicycle, covering 2000 miles over a summer (Handlebards 2015). In 2014 the Handlebards received the Edinburgh Fringe Award for Sustainable Practice.

marketing for which is ominously nationalist in light of current political events.²⁷ Both Shakespeare's Globe and the Open Air Theatre at Regent's Park are registered charities and neither receives regular funding. In addition to outdoor Shakespeares produced by these well-known organisations, there are also smaller amphitheatres scattered around the U.K., including Minack on the coast of Cornwall, Grosvenor Park in Chester, Williamson Park in Lancaster, and the Willow Globe, mid Wales. There are also examples of one-off site-based productions of Shakespeare outdoors. These are more difficult to map as they tend to emerge from particular practitioners and in found spaces, leaving little trace of the work.

Given that outdoor Shakespeares tend to take place during the summer and often during school holidays, the repertoire is mostly limited to Shakespeare's comedies and 'most nature-laden plays' (Cless 2010: 91). *Macbeth's* witches and Birnam wood are also popular, as are *Lear's* blasted heath and *Juliet's* balcony. Shakespeare's Globe's Battlefield performances and an occasional *Henry V* aside, it is unusual to find a production of any of the other history plays or tragedies enacted in the kinds of outdoor spaces I am looking at. There are very few instances of performances early modern plays by playwrights other than Shakespeare performed by small outdoor theatre companies. Like Regent's Park, many produce adaptations of classic novels, children's stories, Oscar Wilde, or Noel Coward plays, and even musicals by Gilbert and Sullivan, all notably family-friendly, culturally conservative, and out of copyright.²⁸ The choice of non-Shakespearean material often reflects the idea of a stately home costume drama, evoking the BBC's *Downton Abbey* more than an early modern Shakespeare, and facilitating a kind of 'doing of Shakespeare', to borrow and adapt Laurajane Smith's idea of a 'doing of heritage' (2009: 72-73).

Case studies

My rationale for selecting case studies was to include diverse outdoor performance environments and a range of approaches to space, with the hope of seeing whether it was possible to identify cross-cutting as well as localized themes. Cognisant of environmental,

²⁷ I attended *The Winter's Tale* at The Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park in July 2013 and interviewed director Ria Parry. This theatre space is not used as a case study either, partly because the Shakespeares at this theatre under artistic director Timothy Sheader have all been productions specially reimagined for children aged 6 and over. Additionally, these audiences largely comprised school groups and gaining permission to speak to young people was methodologically prohibitive on this occasion.

²⁸ The dearth of early modern plays other than Shakespeare's on the heritage circuit reflects Susan Bennett's argument that many Jacobean plays, especially city comedies and revenge tragedies, are frequently portrayed as sexy, raunchy and debauched cousins of Shakespeare, and therefore an alternative to Shakespearean nostalgia (1996: 79-118). Although the historical trajectory of outdoor Shakespeares harks back to often-Bowdlerized performances, many of today's performances combine a curious mixture of forced winks and codpiece jokes with 'family-friendly' productions.

practical, and resource concerns, I refined my selection, balancing the need to take in the widest possible range of spaces and performances with a consideration of their proximity to my base at the University of Exeter. Consequently, the geographical scope of the research largely centres on the southern half of the land mass that makes up mainland Britain, venturing west to Wales and Cornwall and east to London, with Ripley, North Yorkshire a notably northern exception. I made this exception to travel to Ripley for Sprite's performances because they referred explicitly to their work as 'site-specific', and also because they had a uniquely longstanding relationship with the place in which they performed, presenting Shakespeare every year on different parts of the castle grounds. Many of the touring performances I looked at also travelled further afield. For instance, I attended performances of Heartbreak Productions' *Romeo and Juliet* across the South West of England and the same performance also toured as far as the Scottish Highlands.

Once I had identified the ideal case studies and in the months leading up to the first summer's fieldwork, I approached theatre companies by email and followed up with telephone calls where appropriate. Most were pleased to assist and interested in the research, although some declined outright and others failed to respond. I responded in turn by continuing to work through potentially suitable case studies until I had sufficient permissions and contingency plans for wet weather cancellations. Conversations ensued to ensure they understood the research, to agree how, when, and where interviews could be conducted, to agree the kinds of questions that would be asked, and how the data would be used.

The performance spaces and theatre companies that form the case studies of this thesis are:

The Willow Globe, Radnorshire, mid-Wales.

The Willow Globe is a living willow theatre, based on Shakespeare's Globe in London. The Willow Globe is a part of the Shakespeare Link charity and is described as 'a community theatre' on the website (Willow Globe 2014). I attended the resident amateur Willow Globe Company's *All's Well That Ends Well* (dirs. Sue Best and Philip Bowen) in May 2013 and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (dirs. Best, Bowen, and Tom Syms) in May/ June 2014. The Willow Globe received some grant funding from Age Cymru, BBC Performing Arts Fund, and the Ashley Family Foundation for *Merry Wives*, although much of the work undertaken at this theatre is voluntary.

Minack, Porthcurno, Cornwall.

Minack is an outdoor amphitheatre carved into the sea-cliffs at Porthcurno, Cornwall and acts as a receiving house for a seventeen week summer season. Mostly an amateur

performance space, professionals are occasionally brought in for slots that are difficult to fill with non-professional groups (Jackson 2013). The Shakespeares I attended at Minack were professional productions. In 2013, I attended Another Way Theatre Company's *Antony and Cleopatra* (dir. Chris Chambers) and Shakespeare's Globe's *The Taming of the Shrew* (dir. Joe Murphy). In July 2014, I attended Moving Stories *The Tempest* (dir. Emma Gersch). The Minack Theatre Trust is a registered charity and receives no public funding for performances.

Taking Flight Theatre Company, Cardiff, Wales.

Taking Flight is a professional theatre company based in Cardiff, working with disabled and non-disabled actors to create 'inclusive and accessible' performance (Taking Flight: 2014). In July 2013 I attended *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (dir. Elise Davison) at Blaise Castle, Bristol. In June/ July 2014 I attended *As You Like It* (dir. Elise Davison) at Cyfarthra Park, Methyr Tyfdil, Thomson's Park, Cardiff, and Blaise Castle, Bristol. Both were promenade productions. Taking Flight is a not-for-profit company. For *Dream* and *As You Like It*, Taking Flight was sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Teatro Vivo, south east London.

Teatro Vivo is a professional theatre company based in South East London, aiming to 'turn everyday environments into magical worlds' (Teatro Vivo 2014: n.p.). In August 2013 I attended performances of *After The Tempest* (dir. Sophie Austin), a promenade adaptation of *The Tempest*, at Mountsfield Park, Lewisham, Barking Park, Barking and at Holland Park, West London. Teatro Vivo is a registered charity. *After the Tempest* was supported by the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum.

Sprite Productions, Ripley, North Yorkshire.

Sprite is a professional theatre company performing Shakespeare at Ripley Castle in North Yorkshire since 2004. I attended their promenade *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (dir. Charlotte Bennett) in July 2014. Sprite Productions were unfunded for this production but were supported in kind by Ripley Castle. They have worked exclusively with Shakespeare's texts since beginning to make work at Ripley in 2004.

Heartbreak Productions, Leamington Spa, west Midlands.

Heartbreak is a professional theatre company, based in Leamington Spa and touring on the heritage circuit, usually performing once at a venue before moving on. In 2013 I attended *Romeo and Juliet* (dir. Maddy Kerr) at the National Trust's Greenway in South Devon, the local government maintained Brandon Hill Park, Bristol, and Cucking Stool Mead, Malmesbury.

Heartbreak received no funding for this production. Heartbreak fits the model of what might be considered ‘traditional’ outdoor touring on the heritage circuit. The company moves between venues, often for no more than a night at a time and the five actors carry out all interactions with their venues, driving, get-ins, get-outs, and selling programmes. This production of *Romeo and Juliet* was staged in the round and the actors found that many of their contacts at the venues were surprised that they should be playing in such an ‘experimental’ stage configuration (Burman et al. 2013).²⁹ I use feedback gathered at Heartbreak’s performances in Part Two of the thesis only.

Fieldwork

I attended fifteen performances of six productions in nine different performance spaces in summer 2013, and thirteen performances of four productions in six different performance spaces in summer 2014. During this period, two-hundred and seventy-three audience members participated in one-hundred and fifty-six semi-structured face-to-face interviews. I carried out most of the interviews myself and the remainder were undertaken by colleagues who were available to travel with me and, occasionally, by volunteers at the venues. After Woods, I consulted individuals as well as small groups of friends and families, with participants welcome to ‘chip in’ as and when they wished to contribute (2012: 39). The shortest interview lasts just over three minutes and the longest runs to just over fifteen, with most falling somewhere in the middle. I conducted further contextual observations of audiences and interviews with creative practitioners, including actors, directors, theatre programmers, and venue managers to support and supplement the audience interviews. Unrecorded exchanges, overheard conversations, and visual observations recorded in my field notes colour and enrich the context in which the interviews took place.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted prior to performances, during intervals, and post-performance. Woods observes ‘an essential sociability to the Globe audience that made this kind of informal conversational research practice feasible in a way that it might not be in a more formal, traditional theatre environment’ (2012: 42). The performances at which I was working shared this sociability. The relaxed, informal, transient nature of the outdoor events also meant that audience members were largely pleased to be asked to contribute to the research. Of those approached over the course of the fieldwork, only three opted not to participate. Two individuals followed up the interview with an email,

²⁹ I carried out three focus groups with the five actors touring with Heartbreak’s *Romeo and Juliet*, towards the beginning, middle, and at the end of their 2013 tour and a number of further individual actor interviews during that first year’s fieldwork. It became clear upon analysing my notes and the interviews after that first summer that there was sufficient need to focus on the audience data alone.

asking where they might find out more about the project and wishing to add to the responses they had given in-situ. There was no reciprocal gain for participants beyond the pleasure many expressed at having the opportunity to share their experience of the performance. Occasionally they appeared keen to speed up the interview process, and the methodology needed to remain flexible enough to respond to the different dynamics and relationships. One woman, who had been particularly moved by her experience of Sprite's *Dream* at Ripley Castle, thanked me for undertaking the research because she felt that there was great value in outdoor performance events.

The relationships I developed with different theatre companies and venues varied, of course, with the available time, interest, and personalities involved, as well as with whoever happened to be working at a venue on a given performance day and what information had been passed on internally. Irrespective of the relationships developed, questions of access and permission recurred as a part of the everyday experience of the fieldwork. I had to negotiate and renegotiate my shifting insider/outsider status continuously. Where participating organisations were happy to allow the interviews to take place, there remained a need to be unobtrusive, sensitive to shifting conditions varying from performance to performance, venue to venue. At the Willow Globe, for example, I camped on the farm and my partner assisted with tearing tickets for the performances. I was offered complimentary tickets to the performances and introduced to some of the local actors and audience members personally. Heartbreak Productions had commercial relationships with their venues and I purchased tickets to these events, as I did for performances at Minack. With Teatro Vivo's *After The Tempest*, the actors were aware of what I was doing and took care of my backpack while the performance was taking place. I purchased tickets for Teatro Vivo's performances, although some of these were free to the public. I initially paid to attend Taking Flight's performances, but, as the tour progressed I was invited to follow the performances without purchasing a ticket. My position fluctuated between outsider and insider throughout my time in the field and, where appropriate in the chapters that follow, I reflect on where and how this might have affected my subjectivity or relationship with participants.

Audience members tended to arrive early for picnics and it was relatively easy to engage groups and individuals in conversations prior to performances. The kinds of questions that could be asked prior to performances were, however, limited to the stories that brought people to the performances—what John Falk calls their 'entry narratives' (in Jackson 2011: 11). Entry narratives were supplemented by their first impressions of the space, their preparations for the event, what they anticipated from the performance, their theatregoing habits more generally, and memories of previous outdoor performances. Once

I had exhausted the range of pre-performance responses, through what is referred to as ‘saturation’ in ethnographic research (Cook and Crang 2007: 14), I ceased these interviews and focussed instead on post-performance responses. Contrary to Guardian theatre critic Lyn Gardner’s assertion that the ideal theatre companion is someone that does ‘not talk about the show too much in the interval’ (Gardner 2014b), I found that many were keen to share at this midpoint. The sociability of intervals in open spaces and in shared light meant that I spoke to people eating picnics, queuing for ice-creams and hot drinks, and even waiting for friends to return from portable toilets. Without solicitation, people who had participated in preshow interviews approached me during the intervals and continued the conversations. As a result, I trialled further interval interviews and continued to utilise these where possible. Most of the promenade performances ran straight through with no interval.

It was the post-performance interviews that allowed audience members to share their immediate responses to the performance after the event, and these are the most detailed, the most revealing, and consequently the most-utilized within my writing. Eversmann argues that,

Because of the transitivity of theatrical events the spectator concentrates mainly on receiving information *during* the performance and on storing it in his/her memory. Analytical processing of that information is therefore for the most part delayed till after the show. (in Cremona et al. 2004: 171 [original emphasis])

There are, of course, limits to how much a person might actually have processed their response to a performance in its immediate aftermath or be able to articulate it (as I discuss in more detail later). One of the simultaneous strengths and challenges of the methodology was that audience members were not expecting the questions: the performance was fresh in their minds as they answered, but equally they had had little time to process the performance at the point of responding.

Although I was not affiliated with any of the theatre companies, one of the more positive effects of my outsider position was that audience members sometimes criticized aspects of the productions in ways that I am not sure they would have had I been officially representing the organisations. At times, however, it seemed that they were themselves trying to play a role; sometimes this was in the form of considering the interviewer an ‘expert’ on Shakespeare and trying to say the ‘right’ things. On other occasions, audience members were keen to demonstrate their support for a particular theatre company or venue, responding to the interviewers as though their responses could make a difference to a company’s reputation

or funding.³⁰ Across all of the interviews, and without prompting, people often recollected stories of previous outdoor performances that they had attended. Sometimes these were memories of outdoors Shakespeares and sometimes they were memories of other outdoor performances. Simply being outdoors and at performance generated memories of previous outdoor theatre experiences, indicating that audience members continue to process performance long after they have witnessed it. As the Literature Review pointed out, the British Theatre Consortium's Spectatorship and Value Attribution project sought 'to investigate whether changes occur in spectators' thinking about their theatre experience over time' (Edgar et al. 2014: 7). In my case, however, it was interesting to hear audience members talking and thinking about previous performances at present performances, which offered a slightly different longitudinal understanding of spectatorship, and would also make an interesting line of inquiry for further kinds of audience research.

Often, and particularly in public parks where no boundaries were enforceable, passers-by stopped to watch for a while before walking away. Children stayed the longest. I would have loved to speak to some of these people but, out of courtesy to the performances, because of the temporary attention of these occasional spectators, and given the ethical barriers of speaking to children without parents/guardians present, this kind of interviewing would have been impractical and rude. Woods decided that it would be unethical to eavesdrop on audience members because she was embedded in the organisation at Shakespeare's Globe but notes that Bridget Escolme—as a paying audience member and relative outsider—makes use of overheard audience conversations in *Talking to the Audience* (Woods 2012: 43; originally Escolme 2005: 25). I do not actually cite overheard conversations because I have sufficient data from the recorded interviews, although these wider ethnographic observations contextualise the voices I do present.

I received agreement from the University of Exeter's ethics committee that verbal consent could be audio-recorded at the start of each interview.³¹ Many of the interviews took

³⁰ In light of trends to evaluate performance with a view to securing and reporting for funding, audience members participating in qualitative research can get caught in what Katya Johanson and Hilary Glow call the 'virtuous circle', feeling compelled to provide a 'positive evaluation' of any performance and a responsibility for supporting the theatre company, making them unlikely to voice any criticisms freely (2015: 255).

³¹ In accordance with guidelines from The American Anthropological Association (AAA), the College of Humanities Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter agreed that, as there was no potential harm to participants, verbal consent could be recorded, with the stipulation that responses would remain anonymous. The AAA advises: 'Section 46.116 (d) authorises the IRB to waive informed consent or approve a consent procedure that alters or eliminates some or all of the elements of informed consent if four conditions are met. (1) the research is of no more than minimal risk; (2) the change in consent procedures will not harm the respondents; (3) the research could not 'practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration'; and (4) whenever appropriate, additional information

place in darkness and in cold or wet conditions. Gaining written consent from participants would have severely limited both the quality and quantity of interviews that could be undertaken. Verbally recording consent made the task of soliciting participants easier than it otherwise might have been. Nonetheless, the act of recording consent and the physical presence of the audio-recorder had implications for the rapport generated between interviewer and participants. It formalized the exchange and occasionally caused participants to respond in a slightly guarded manner. When transcribing the interviews I noticed that, with few exceptions, most began with some form of laughter as participants consented to participate and transitioned into the interview. They usually showed signs of relaxing as the interview progressed and when a particular question sparked an especially bright response. I also noticed a tendency for participants to contribute more freely once the interview had ended and the recorder had been switched off. As the fieldwork continued, I allowed conversations to carry on after the questions had finished and did not officially confirm the end of the interview or turn off the recorder until the conversation drew completely to a close.

The first year's interview questions were based on my own research questions, adapted from the Independent Theatre Council's (ITC) handbook for *Capturing the audience experience* (2010: 52), the 'indicative questions' Woods used at Shakespeare's Globe (2012: 351-352), and Matthew Reason's suggested openers, 'What did you make of that?/ Did you enjoy the performance?' (2010: 19; also in Woods 2012: 42). I followed the ITC's suggestion of having 'a set of core questions that are the same for everyone who is interviewed', while affording the interviewer the 'flexibility to ask follow-up questions that explore more deeply the interviewee's opinions' (2010: 50). This allowed the interviewers to respond in-situ and facilitated a more informal conversational approach, guiding the responses but avoiding leading questions. Interviewers were free to ask the questions in any order and, where appropriate, to leave some out if an audience member was particularly engaged with one aspect of the interview. I tested my proposed questions and amended the wording following these initial encounters. As outlined in the Introduction, my third research question around nature, ecology, and environment came about in response to the initial ethnographic observations made during the first year's fieldwork. Following the analysis, I adapted the

will be provided to subjects after participation' (AAA website 2013). Audience members who verbally consented to participate in my interviews were also given a copy of the form to take away should they have had questions or concerns arising after the event.

interview questions for the second year. Fewer longer interviews were conducted, which I used to dwell longer with certain individuals and on more focussed questions.³²

Woods and her interviewers identified potential participants that they felt comfortable approaching (2012: 42). She reflects that this had the effect of ‘securing the best conversation’ rather than ensuring a random sample of the audiences (42). It also meant that most of those approached were happy to participate. I adopted a similar method, which is common across ethnographic practices, meaning that the sample ‘cannot therefore be understood as ‘representative’ in the positivist sense, but [it does] ‘represent’ a range of views’ (Bhatti et al. 2009: 63). Woods was also able to access some demographic information captured by Shakespeare’s Globe’s booking systems to supplement her interviews, although she acknowledges difficulties with this data and observes the limits as to how much it actually informed her project (38). In my case, written consent would have been needed in order to gather any demographic information. This would have prohibited the number of interviews carried out and the questions that could reasonably be asked in the time available. In *Popular Shakespeare* (2009) Purcell cites director Pete Talbot lamenting the predominance of ‘older, bourgeois, middle-class people’ in the audiences for the open-air Shakespeares he directed: Talbot evades some of the contextual cultural difficulties of the practice when he explains that this is not because the productions are aimed at these limited audiences, but because other people do not think to go (175). Although I am not in a position to provide statistical or quantitative demographic information, my ethnographic observations confirm that outdoor Shakespeares, like many other Shakespeares, remain a largely—though not exclusively—white, middle-brow activity, with all of the implications for access, elitism, and ruralism that such gatherings might entail.³³

Visual observations also allowed me to estimate numbers and adult/children splits. Many audience members offered information about their occupation or place of residence as part of the interview without being asked. Many organisations were happy to share what information they had about bookings, which supported these visual observations. At the Willow Globe, audiences comprised mostly but not exclusively locals, many of whom were

³² See Appendix Three for lists of indicative interview questions.

³³ The RSC and Shakespeare’s Globe actually represent a small proportion of the audience for Shakespeare in the UK. Purcell argues that ‘the productions which tour most widely and are thus available to the highest number of critics are precisely those which take the least notice of their audiences’ (2013: 94). Audiences for outdoor Shakespeares might belong in this category, but as Gaby observes, while audiences for outdoor Shakespeares are relatively small in comparison with audiences for large sports or music events in Australia particularly, they are substantial when compared with audiences for Shakespeare more generally (2014: 3, 109).

known to directors Best, Bowen, and the cast, and many of whom alluded to their connections with the place as part of their interviews. Some information regarding the general make-up of the audience was available from Minack, Taking Flight Theatre Company (who proactively cast disabled and non-disabled actors and subsequently attract a greater proportion of disabled audience members), and Teatro Vivo's booking systems (Teatro Vivo's Southeast London audiences were visibly the most ethnically diverse). At Sprite's performances, producer William Edwards asked each audience for a 'show of hands' to see who had previously attended their work. Although unscientific, Edwards carried out this exercise at every performance over the run and claimed that there was usually an equal split between those who had and hadn't been to one of Sprite's performances before (Edwards 2014). Consequently, what I know about who was in the audiences varies across the contexts. I make no attempt at quantitative analysis. This is undoubtedly a necessary compromise, although my observations, the interviews, and information available from the theatre companies and venues helped to contextualise the responses. The ethnographic approach is neither intended nor considered to be a substitute for quantitative research.

Analysis

Following my fieldwork, I transcribed each interview verbatim, re-familiarising myself with the contents. While the recordings reflect the environments in which they took place—containing wind, animals, birds, chatter, sirens, waves crashing on rocks, interviewers fumbling—most of these ambient sounds evade words on the page. Despite working with audio recorders suited to picking up voices in outdoor spaces, active, windy weather occasionally obscured the human voices in the recordings. I include specific interruptions in the written transcriptions where possible. These moments where human voices were eclipsed by the rest of the world served as a useful reminder of just how much the extra-theatrical stimuli were at work in the environments: in Laura Levin's words, 'we are not the 'originators of the world's speech'' (2014: 107).

The quantity of interviews conducted meant that I needed an effective way of analysing the conversations. Sauter writes of an 'inductive' analysis (2010: 247), as does Woods (2012: 39), although neither explains exactly what an inductive analysis consists of. I initially undertook a thematic analysis based on Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke's 'Thematic Analysis in Psychology' (2006), which offers a flexible way of undertaking qualitative analysis that suggests a process of coding data according to themes. This meant working through each transcript, applying codes to the kinds of things people said, creating a list of these codes, and then attempting to shape them into larger overarching themes, as

well as identifying anomalies. I wanted to avoid the ‘emerged from the data’ trap that Braun and Clarke warn against (2006: 80): nothing ‘emerges’ from ‘data’ on its own accord, the researcher picks out what they notice and chooses the story they want to tell. Much of the ethnographic process is led by the researcher’s questions, her personal biases, and, inevitably, choices are made in writing and editing. Thematic analysis added some articulable rigour to the way I analysed and drew conclusions from the data, but the reflexive approach to writing allowed more scope for a rounded ethnography.

I began the analysis with the Willow Globe, where the fieldwork began, and then repeated the exercise with the codes identified here as a starting point for the others. As well as some crossover, there were inevitably further codes added and further themes arising at different performances and different venues. This process was repeated for each space and then cross-referenced with the others to identify themes recurring at multiple contexts and those that were particular to a venue or performance. Irrespective of whether performances were amateur or professional and irrespective of their geographical and environmental differences, I identified themes that were common across the range of performances and places as well as those recurring only locally. Accordingly, the first two case study chapters look at what was specific to particular places and performances in their local contexts, whereas the second two look at themes that recurred across the range of case studies, shifting between places and performances. The voices I present both support and contradict one another but the overlap and contradictions begin to hint at the lived experience. I have constructed the ethnography always cognisant of my subjectivity, of the murky insider/outsider position I occupied, and of my ethical responsibility towards the individuals who generously facilitated the project by sharing their people, views, and time.

Theory and ethnography

By asking people to respond to performances in-situ, my methodology sought the ‘aesthetic immediacy’ that Ewan Fernie and Simon Palfrey call for in the second wave of the *Shakespeare Now!* series; an immediacy they describe as ‘a model of aesthetic knowledge as *encounter*, where the encounter brings its own, often surprising contextualizing imperatives’ (2012: xiv [original emphasis]). But what kind of account of experience might speaking about an experience of performance actually bring about? How likely is any audience member to reveal her most personal responses to a stranger in a field in the dark as part of an unexpected encounter? And even if someone were so inclined to share freely, to what extent could she actually articulate her experience of performance? In his foundational work on nonrepresentational theory, Nigel Thrift declares that ‘there is no stable ‘human’ experience

because the human sensorium is constantly being re-invented as the body continually adds parts in to itself; therefore how and what is experienced as experience is itself variable' (2008: 2). I am not attempting to argue that a verbal account of a performance experience—even when recorded immediately after the event—provides access to any kind of 'truth' or overarching 'experience', any more than other mediated and contingent forms of reflection might. Similarly, I am in agreement with the criticisms of Clifford Geertz's famous 'thick description' (1973) that argue that culture is not reducible to text. For instance, although James Clifford once suggested ethnographies were 'partial truths' or 'fictions' (1986: 6), since the 'crisis of representation' in anthropology, new ethnographic approaches have become more reflexive in attending to the role of the ethnographer in 'crafting' any ethnography, eschewing the notions that 'experience' is ever accessible or that any kind of 'truth' is possible (Madison 2005:12). The 'clay bowl' Abram describes evocatively is only ever partially knowable from any given angle—turn a bowl upside down and the inside of the bowl disappears from view (1996: 51). Ethnography, grasping for experience, mediating 'themes' in written language, filtered through subjectivity and self-reflexivity on the ethnographer's part, simply offers one way in to a context. The ethnography is a point of entry, never claiming or pretending to fully know or represent 'the other'.

While audience members' spontaneous responses were initially accepted uncritically, then, and without any attempt to second-guess what they might have concealed at a deeper level (although the term 'thematic analysis' originates in psychology, I make no attempt to psychoanalyse the data), wider social, cultural, and environmental factors cannot but inflect my subsequent reflexive analysis. Moores, whose work on television audiences I cited above, advocates for 'an ethnographic perspective which is committed to critically *analysing* culture as well as describing it (1993: 4 [emphasis added]). He calls for a kind of audience ethnography that is 'not afraid to interrogate and situate their spoken accounts' (5). As I conducted the fieldwork, analysed the results, and constructed the written ethnography, I sought to allow the ethnography to 'speak for itself'—recalling Tim Cresswell's argument for ethnographic participants as 'everyday theorists who bring their own ideas of place to bear on the place they live in' (2004: 79)—and also to put the writing into conversation with existing critical theory in the environmental humanities, embracing the 'creative tensions and cross-pollination' (Biehl 2013: 575) that arise from this attempted dialogue.

As a result, the four chapters engage with a broad range of differing theoretical perspectives from different epistemologies, all of which have something useful to say about the idea of culture in nature. These theories do not always sit comfortably together, but, cutting through any discomfort, tensions, and conflicts are the ethnographic examples. I

wanted to avoid making a ‘paranoid reading’ (Sedgwick 2003) of the ethnographic data, to avoid too quickly pouncing upon the audience responses with critique, and to let the ethnography breathe first. In keeping with Mike Pearson’s archaeological methodology that aspires to adopt ‘an attitude critical and suspicious of orthodoxy; an approach which embraces the impossibility of any final account of things’ (2006: 27), theory is utilized to negotiate aspects of the ethnography. In no way does it fix the responses or have the last word. Tim Ingold proposes one such ‘opening’ approach to anthropology, explaining:

It is of the essence of life that it does not begin here or end there, or connect a point of origin with a final destination, but rather that it keep on going, finding a way through the myriad of things that form, persist and break up in its currents. Life, in short, is a movement of opening, not of closure. As such, it should lie at the very heart of anthropological concern. (2011: 3-4)

My attempt has been to try to meander carefully through the range of conflicting ideas that emerged throughout the fieldwork in the written ethnography. I hope that the chapters and the themes discussed clarify and justify why a certain theorist or idea is included at a given point in the writing, opening up possibilities for new ways of thinking about outdoor Shakespeares, rather than attempting to connect them to a final account or destination.

Ecophenomenology and Materialisms

The audience responses disclosed phenomenological concerns, although the ethnography is not in itself a phenomenological analysis. Timothy Clark works through the ecocriticism that is indebted to twentieth-century continental phenomenology, including now-familiar citations of Edmund Husserl’s famous call ‘to the things themselves’, Martin Heidegger’s ‘dwelling’ as a way of ‘being-in-the-world’, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s ‘embodied perception’, as well as Merleau-Ponty’s later, unfinished work on the ‘flesh of the world’ (Clark 2015: 276). Of the thinking in philosophy and geography that draws on this continental phenomenology, works such as those by Yi Fu Tuan (1974), Edward Relph (1976), Edward Casey (2009) on place, Gaston Bachelard on space (1994), and Christopher Tilley on landscape (1994; 2010), are now also familiar in studies of site-specific theatre and performance. More recent manifestations of ‘ecophenomenology’ respond to emerging and escalating environmental concerns, indebted to the continental phenomenology that underpins them. In our pressing ecological circumstances, Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine remain convinced of phenomenology’s unique capacity ‘for bringing to expression, rather than silencing, our relation with nature and the experience of value rooted in this relation’ (2003: xii). They seek in ecophenomenology a ‘cross-disciplinary’ (xii) method that

incorporates the subject's experience of its environment within questions of values, ethics, and aesthetics.

Those whose writing has also been classed as ecophenomenological include David Abram—author of the *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1996), which draws on Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, and *Becoming Animal* (2010)—and Gernot Böhme's work on atmospheres and aesthetics (1993). Indeed, Clark selects both Abram and Böhme as examples of 'green philosophy' in his contribution on 'Phenomenology' to *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism* (2014: 279), although neither Abram nor Böhme themselves work on literary texts. Böhme argues for 'a theory of perception in the fullest sense of the term, in which perception is understood as the experience of persons, objects and environments' (116), and Chapter Three hones in on Böhme's 'atmospheres' specifically. In spite of legitimate criticisms of Abram's take on Merleau-Ponty's 'intersubjectivity' and 'sentience', though, Abram's evocative writing on the experience of nature—aesthetically and through the body—both reflects and puts into relief some of the audience conversations throughout all four of my chapters.

Clark, however, is wary of phenomenology in ecocriticism, and rightly so, arguing that it has started to have a 'slightly dated, twentieth-century feel' (2014: 276). As I pointed out when setting up the term 'environment', what is perceptible as 'my environment' no longer satisfactorily takes in the sphere of a person's ecological influence. Clark proposes that phenomenological approaches no longer fulfil the needs of an ecologically-oriented philosophy, if they ever did, and suggests that 'modes of thinking tied to phenomenology, or indeed to any thinking inherently tied to the scale of the individual life, are likely to be circumscribed or incomplete' (287). A further, more vehemently articulated critique of ecophenomenology comes from Timothy Morton, who utilises deconstruction and argues that what is perceptible in any one place does not fulfil the needs to 'think big' (2010: 20-58). Any kind of place-based thinking, Morton insists, 'impedes a truly ecological view' (26), as he calls for 'dislocation, dislocation, dislocation' (28). For Morton, Abram's is 'utopian prose' (2007: 142) and Morton asserts that 'The constant assertion that we were "embedded" in a lifeworld is, paradoxically, a symptom of drastic separation' (2010: 8). He is memorably scathing on Heideggerian 'dwelling' in place, quipping that 'Heidegger's phenomenology is a

sad, fascist, stunted bonsai version, forced to grow in a tiny iron flowerpot by a cottage in the German Black forest' (27).³⁴

For these valid reasons, I too am wary of the methodological limits of ecophenomenology. But, for all the caveats, there is much that lends itself to ecophenomenological concerns in the audience responses I am working with, despite, and perhaps also because of, the placed positions from which they are expressed. The ethnography in the chapters that follow engages with ecophenomenological concerns, inasmuch as the audience members speak about their experiences, and inasmuch as their experiences are bound up with encounters of the environments in which the performances take place. But while I disagree with much of what Morton has to say on place, his ideas are useful for putting some of the arguments into relief and for maintaining 'openness' in the ethnography. Clark's provocation, too, that 'all that is most challenging in the twenty-first century about the environmental crisis—politically, socially, psychologically, and philosophically—can be gauged to the degree to which it challenges or even eludes altogether a phenomenological approach' (284), strengthens an argument for keeping the ethnography open, and for navigating between a shifting set of theoretical lenses. The cultural position of Shakespeare in Britain in the context of my study, for instance, necessitates a juxtaposition of ecophenomenological approaches with materialist thinking within the environmental humanities, broadly conceived, especially where these ideas are critical of ecophenomenology. One such approach that uses ecophenomenological writing to spark social, political and cultural questions successfully is Rob Nixon's chapter on 'Barrier Beach', which concludes *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism* (2014: 560-565). Nixon follows phenomenological recollections of his childhood experiences of sea-swimming at a South African beach with postcolonial critiques of apartheid, triggered by this embodied memory of being carried by the bobbing waves. Inspired by Nixon, ecophenomenological concerns run through all four of my chapters and these are complemented and challenged by materialist, social, and cultural questions.

The materialist perspectives I draw on include the kinds of cultural materialist approaches introduced in the Introduction (Dollimore 2010; Dollimore and Sinfield 1994; Drakakis 1985; Hawkes 1996; Henderson 2007; Holderness 1988; Parvini 2012; Sinfield 2006; Williams 1977, 1985; Soper 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012), materialist thinking from a broadly

³⁴ Heideggerian 'dwelling' or 'dasein' was initially popular in literary ecocriticism but has, more recently, come in for significant criticism. For some of these criticisms, see Agnew 2011: 7; Cresswell 2004: 22; Egan 2006: 42; Garrard in Kerridge and Sammels 1998: 168; Pearson 2006: 12.

Marxist lineage concerning space and place (Harvey 2001; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 2005), and what has come to be known as ‘new materialist’ thought (Bennett 2010; Iovino and Opperman 2014; Ingold 2011). Within these varied studies of matter, materials, and materialism, however, there are tensions too. As the Introduction explained, running throughout the thesis are tensions between Jane Bennett’s new ‘materialism in the tradition of Democritus-Epicurus-Spinoza-Diderot-Deleuze’ (2010: xiii) and Kate Soper’s work, which is more closely aligned with ‘Hegel-Marx-Adorno’, and with Raymond Williams (Soper 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012). Bennett’s ‘vital materialism’ draws on Spinoza’s ‘conatus’ to argue that matter is not only not inert but lively, that it possesses ‘an active, earthy, not-quite human capaciousness (vibrant matter)’ (2010: 3). At the heart of Bennett’s argument is that ‘things, too, are vital players in the world’ (4). She attempts ‘a more radical displacement of the human subject than phenomenology’ (30) in her disavowal of a subject/object distinctions for ‘actants’, after Bruno Latour (9)—multiple actants, after Deleuze and Guattari, for Bennett, make up ‘assemblages’ or ‘ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts’ (23). Soper, however, is critical of any kind of posthumanist thinking, insisting that in order to develop a successful eco-politics, we will have to work with ‘human exceptionalism’ (2012: 371). For Soper, a commitment to ‘human exceptionalism [...] lurks’ (375) within new materialist arguments and she suggests that working with human exceptionalism (and acknowledging the exceptional damage humans have caused) might be the most useful way to forge a new ecopolitics.

Given the range of directions in which the ethnography gestures, I introduce and explain the theory as I work through the audience responses in each chapter. To reiterate, no single theoretical stance has been adequate or wanted to wholly frame this ethnography. As I explore some of the ways that the outdoor environment ‘infects and inflects’ (Escolme 2012: 505) audience reception within specific cultural circumstances, I have tried to allow some of the unavoidable clashes between social, cultural, and environmental concerns to speak to one another within the responses. In the context of the ethnography, audience references to the nonhuman are always iterated from a perspective of human experience, looping back to phenomenology circuitously. Although I draw out certain themes, the reader will doubtless observe further overlapping ideas within the conversations that might also be considered. The ethnography stays open, as Ingold seeks, and is open to multiple interpretations and readings.

Writing reflexively

As I have already mentioned, post-positivist approaches to ethnography rightly require the researcher to position herself in the field, to reflect on her inescapable presence throughout the research and to the discursive and intersubjective production of the writing (Crang and Cook 2007: 82). I am female, Irish, in my 30s, white, and my identity doubtless influenced the relationships I developed with audience members. Many asked me about my accent. While all interviewers utilized the same template, questions, and briefing, the recordings demonstrated varied personalities and kinds of rapport between individuals. As Mike Crang and Ian Cook argue, ‘the researcher and researched together *construct* intersubjective understandings [and produce] results in *dialogue* with participants (2007: 60 [original emphasis]). Criticisms, however, of too much dwelling on the researcher’s subjectivity in ethnography prompt justifiable concerns about ‘navel-gazing’ and an over-preoccupation with self, although Clifford argues that self-reflexivity ‘need not lead to hyper self-consciousness and self-absorption’ (1986: 15). To acknowledge how my data was produced in dialogue with others, I include the interviewer’s questions and comments alongside the audience member’s where suitable. In Chapters One and Two, where the focus is on particular places and performances, I offer some of my own experiences in the form of ‘postcards from the field’ (Crang 2002: 163), lifted directly from my field notes. This is both to acknowledge my embeddedness in the field and to go a way towards acknowledging any imbalance of power arising between a perceived academic authority and the orthographically transcribed audience responses. Crang first employs ‘postcards from the field’ in his own writing ‘to parody and play with academic authority by reducing field notes to a similar format as touristic postcards sent while on holiday [...] and reminding the reader of the detachment felt by the researcher in the field.’ (163). He includes moments where they are ‘embarrassingly written’ (164). As much as audience members were put on the spot, I attempt to put myself on the spot through this sharing. There remains nonetheless a selection and editing process that leaves any balance of power tipped towards the writer, but I hope to demonstrate at least an awareness of potential imbalances and take steps to mitigate them.

Audience members were interviewed anonymously and, after Woods (2012: 50), and as is common practice in ethnography, they have been given alternate first names. I drew these from a list of names overheard and recorded in my field notes while undertaking the fieldwork. It is a shame that audience members are turned into anonymous figures while scholars and practitioners are cited in full. I wish I did not have to lose the real identities of audience members, but, in the given circumstances, it would have been impractical to gather the kinds of information necessary to write this kind of ethnography. As my writing shifts

between perspectives, between audience members, actors, scholars, reviewers, and my own observations, I attempt to be clear about who is speaking at a given time, weighting audience members' responses over other 'interpretative communities' (Fish 1980: 171).

Writing ethnography is always a partly creative processes: I have told one story and another researcher might have told another using the same data and research questions. Freshwater urges 'that statements about audience response be framed in careful, conditional terms, sensitive to tendencies to generalise about audiences and to judge them without evidence' (2009: 10), and, while attempting to avert the temptation to over-generalise or to get lost in specificity, I have attempted to put voices into dialogue and to create a polyvocal account, identifying consensus and seeking to unsettle it with anomalies. This is done with a view to both giving a voice to a previously unheard set of voices, who in turn suggest a turn of attention to the unheard 'voices' of more-than-human natures with whom the space was shared. Having established the need to attend to questions of experience in the Introduction and Literature Review, an ethnographic methodology allowed me to gather responses that both evidence and challenge information only previously assumed or surmised. The specificity and diversity of the responses, the small details, and the differing modes of expression all contribute to the richness of the resultant ethnography. My processes and outcomes simultaneously support the argument that empirical audience research is methodologically challenging and time consuming, while offering another approach to carrying out this kind of work, with its own strengths and limits. I have not solved the methodological challenges Sauter anticipates in 2010, but I do contribute to the increasing and ongoing attempts to ask audiences what they make of performance, to record their answers, and to engage in a way that allows supported and, I hope, useful conclusions to be drawn.

Lastly, I would also like to acknowledge just how much the people I spoke to make this thesis. Audience members were generous, articulate, and keen to share. They often took me by surprise and continually challenged my own assumptions. The results are much brighter than I imagined they might be.

CHAPTER ONE: Shakespeare inspired nature-theatres: Minack and the Willow Globe

This chapter focusses on two theatres built for Shakespeare, in nature. One is quite literally carved into sea-cliffs, the other growing in the earth. The first is a world famous tourist attraction, the second much smaller in scale. Notwithstanding their respective historical, geographical, contextual, and operational particularities, I want to attend to some of what Minack on the coast of Cornwall and the Willow Globe in Llanwrthwl, mid-Wales share, before considering their local differences. At heart, these are both purpose-built outdoor theatres for non-professional performance. Both are inspired by Shakespeare and both were built to home his plays. The two theatres are the creations of energetic and deeply invested individuals and are separately positioned in remote, rural areas with distinctive climates, landscapes, flora, fauna, geologies, and theatre audiences. Both nature/theatre projects are geographically distant from the London or ‘mainstream’ British theatre scenes but, complicating this remoteness, their Shakespeare inspiration chafes with some of the contemporary, experimental, and often political theatre being produced in Cornwall and Wales in recent years.³⁵ The theatres’ locations and landscapes are therefore crucial to understanding audience responses to Shakespeare here.

The performances in this chapter are not examples of site-specific performances in the sense of ‘emerging from or being purposely written in response to the space of performance’ (Gaby 2014: 11). They enact subtly different relationships between ‘action and space’ to those Mike Pearson discusses when he cites architect Bernard Tschumi’s categories of ‘reciprocity’, ‘indifference’ and/or ‘conflict’ as ways in which performance might relate to space (2010: 38). Although the Shakespeares at Minack and the Willow Globe were not created with a view to achieving ‘reciprocity’ with their respective theatre spaces, nor, however, were they received as entirely ‘indifferent’ to these spaces, as the multiple introductory examples I cited suggested they might be. Audiences at Minack and the Willow Globe were variously responsive to the ‘vibrant matter’, the ‘active, earthy, not-quite-human capaciousness’ (Bennett 2010: 3), of waves, rocks, willow, and weather that made up the theatre spaces, as well as to social and cultural stories and histories of the places, very far from indifferent to them. Like landscape phenomenologist Christopher Tilley, audience

³⁵ I am not considering how Shakespeare’s few references to Cornwall and Wales resonate within these particular theatre spaces, although there is scope for a more geographically specific study of Shakespeare in performance. For theatre in Cornwall, Alan Kent’s *The Theatre of Cornwall: space, place, performance* (2010) is exemplary and Kent’s earlier article “Art Thou of Cornish Crew?: Shakespeare, *Henry V* and Cornish Identity” (1996) addresses textual references to Cornwall in Shakespeare. For Welsh Shakespeare, see Willy Maley and Philip Schwyzer’s *Shakespeare and Wales* (2010).

responses to Minack and the Willow Globe stressed ‘the *materiality* of landscapes: landscapes as real and physical rather than simply as cognised or imagined or represented’ (2010: 26 [original emphasis]). But ‘materiality’ in the responses to both of these theatres can be understood in two ways. After Tim Ingold’s proposition that ‘The abstract concept of materiality [...] has actually hindered the proper understanding of materials’ (2011: 16), I have found it helpful to consider both the ‘materials’ that physically make these theatres, as well as the more abstract, contextual ‘material conditions’—that might be understood as historically or culturally ‘materialist’ (Bennett 2004: 367). The scenographic materials present in the landscapes at Minack and the Willow Globe generated responses that demonstrate audience attention turning towards the nonhuman as they temporarily touch down in the theatres, without the practitioners doing more than the plays in the places to bring these responses about. Simultaneously, Shakespeare’s presence in the landscapes complicated and challenged these experiential readings.

Furthermore, given that both theatre structures were designed with Shakespeare in mind, the plays did not seem sufficiently out of place in the theatres—despite incongruities between the fictitious locations presented in the plays and the Cornish/Welsh landscapes—to warrant describing the relationship between performance and space as ‘conflicting’ either. Nothing about the performances actively sought to generate Pearson’s ‘friction’ between that which was ‘*of the place*’ and what was ‘brought to the place’ (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 111 [original emphasis]), apparently seeking harmony more than rupture in spaces that ‘felt right’ for Shakespeare. Audience members only occasionally noted disjuncture between the performance content and the theatre spaces, whatever eco-political critique their appropriative framing of the environment might provoke.

In what follows, I contextualise first Minack and then the Willow Globe. Then in sections of ethnography, I refer to both embodied and imagined constructions of the theatres as reported by audience members. Each section incorporates a brief analysis of responses to a particular play, Moving Stories’ *The Tempest* at Minack and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at the Willow Globe. Drawing extensively from the audience interviews, I find, after geographer and street performer Paul Simpson, that despite the performances not seeking ‘ecological ways of being-in-the-world’ their audiences were nonetheless ‘inextricably enmeshed [...] in more-than-human ecologies’ (2013: 181). While the performances were not structured ‘ecodramaturgically’ either, intending to put ‘ecological reciprocity and community at the centre of [their] theatrical and thematic intent’ (Arons and May 2012: 4), the responses they stimulated nonetheless offered ‘insights [...] into our material embeddedness and enmeshment in and with the more-than-human environment that contains and sustains us’

(2-3) such as those ecodramaturgy seeks. Throughout, I am arguing for the need to think about these performance events as experiences of places that exceed the act of attendance at the performance of a play alone: the argument is for readings of place at Minack and the Willow Globe that understand the theatrical events as inseparable from the wider experience of the outdoor places in which they are presented. The story is told, as much as possible, in the words of those interviewed at these theatres in the present(ly gone) summers of 2013 and 2014.

Minack



Fig. 1.1. The Minack Theatre, photograph courtesy of Minack Theatre Trust (2015)

Postcards from the field

The sea is green, turquoise, blue, grey. Sky pink, blue, lilac, grey, white. Sun sets behind theatre – is it ‘refracted’ soft clouds on the horizon we see from auditorium? Sun’s not in your eyes but lights stage for the first part of the performance. Subtropical plants smell good (stronger?) in the evening...or at least I’m noticing them more? Is that to do with pollen and air temperature?

(Field notes 6 June 2013)

Although Minack was created for a local performance of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in 1932, the extended theatre now opens from May to September, hosting musicals, operas, plays and Shakespeares—all ‘ghosts’ for a week—and mostly performed by amateur companies with large casts. Minack audiences tend to comprise large groups of tourists as

well as committed ‘Friends’, locals, and school groups. Theatre manager Phil Jackson estimates that the tourist/ local split between audiences during the busiest months is about 70/ 30, while this can be as close as 50/50 on the edges of the season, when locals, many of whom work in tourism and related industries, are freer to attend (Jackson 2013). Minack’s extended auditorium now accommodates in excess of 700 audience members, with modest ticket prices dividing first-come-first-served seating between lower and vertiginous upper terraces.³⁶ Some queue for hours to get the best position, although it is not uncommon for audience members to leave at the interval, when they get too cold, or to catch some form of transport back to Penzance.³⁷ Currently rated the top ‘thing to do’ in Cornwall on TripAdvisor (Tripadvisor 2015) and first in a Whatsonstage survey of the world’s ten most ‘beautiful theatres’ (Whatsonstage 2014), day-visitors can attend the visitor centre, subtropical gardens, café, and gift-shop that keep the unsubsidized Minack Charitable Trust financially independent (Minack DVD 2013).

Both Michael Dobson (2011) and Alan Kent (2010) offer separate critiques of Minack in terms of Shakespeare and Britain. Separately, they see the theatre performing a cultural imperialist function, although Dobson’s context is amateur Shakespeare in Britain and Kent’s is proto-Cornish theatre. Dobson argues that ‘Minack labels the whole of the British mainland as Shakespeare’s, in a posture at once of beckoning lighthouse and of defensive sentinel’ (2011: 189). Kent is troubled by Minack for two reasons; one is the predominance of ‘imported’ canonical English plays at the theatre and the other is the ‘cultural imperialist difficulty’ of a theatre created by a ‘middle-class Englishwoman’ significantly altering the Cornish landscape prior to laws protecting the heritage coastline (2010: 635).³⁸ He is right, of course, that Minack’s mythologized founder Rowena Cade could not construct such a theatre in the more ecologically-regulated twenty-first century. But while Kent and Dobson both make persuasive arguments, I suggest that audience responses to landscape and Shakespeare at Minack offer a more nuanced understanding of place than they allow. This is not an attempt to de-politicise the space but to consider how a previously

³⁶ In 2014 tickets at Minack were £11 for lower terrace and £9 for upper terrace seats.

³⁷ In 2013 the 504 bus route between Land’s End and St Ives, which included a stop at Porthcurno and which many holidaymakers used to get to Minack, was the victim of local council budget cuts. Up until this point, audience members without access to their own transport had the option of leaving a performance early to catch the last bus from Porthcurno.

³⁸ The Minack website lists every performance there since the theatre opened in 1932. It is noteworthy that popular musicals—cultural imports of another kind—far outweigh Shakespeare in recent decades. The predominance of American musicals suggests a more complex picture of global influences and a different kind of cultural imperialism to the one Kent points out.

absent set of voices urge us to pay more heed to the affective agency of the nonhuman environment.

A beautiful but demanding landscape

David Abram theorises depth—as opposed to width and height—in landscape, venturing that ‘Depth is not a determinate relation between inert objects arrayed within a static space, but a dynamic tension between bodies, between beings that beckon and repulse one another across an expanse that can never be precisely mapped’ (2010: 98-99). He is trying to get away from two-dimensional ways of thinking about landscape and seeking to grasp what happens *in* landscape, how it shifts with the eye of the (sometimes human, sometimes nonhuman) perceiver. This kind of depth seems obvious at Minack, cut into the cliffs where the vast Atlantic meets the Cornish coast. On a clear day, Minack’s expansive horizons reach uncontained, obscured at other times by mist, fog, and rain, altering what is perceptible from the auditorium. Black tipped gulls make luminous white flecks where sunlight meets the clouds. Cormorants skim stretches of sea, before diving down. Below, above, at eye level, moving of their own accord and moving with the dizzy eye of the perceiver, birds fly, float, disappear and re-emerge from the waves that swirl and batter the theatre’s eroding edges. As evening unfolds, boats and beaches fade to shadows, outlines, then memories. Occasional wings blink at the furthest reaches of the electric stage lights. Even at night-time, the sea is remembered in the relentless meeting between waves and rock and in the taste of salty sea-spray. Landscape at Minack is dynamic and deep. Being in landscape, Tim Cresswell argues, is what turns landscape into place (2004: 10).

In June 2013, prior to Another Way Theatre Company’s *Antony and Cleopatra* at Minack, I spoke to audience members Dan and Hazel, who engaged in a conversation about the landscape: ‘It’s idyllic/ Yeah. The beaches are lovely. The flowers... /The striking thing from this angle is the colour of the water and the sea is exceptional’ (7 June 2013). John, another audience member at the same performance, described feeling as though he had left England (which of course, some Cornish might argue, he had):

I think one of the things that strikes you is you wouldn’t think it was England. It seems to be full of subtropical plants. The sun is shining. The beach is sandy. The sea is a pale warm-looking blue. As I say it doesn’t feel like England at all. That’s nothing against England. But it’s... it’s very different to most of England so the feel of the place is...it’s quite different to England and that’s very attractive. (7 June 2013)

Quite aside from the performance of Shakespeare’s play, John referenced plants, sunlight, sea, and sand, which conflicted with his sense of what an English landscape might look like. As John’s response to the landscape at Minack begins to show, audience members seemed

to respond to a landscape comprised of ‘vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics’ (Bennett 2010: 5). They simultaneously support a reading of the materials that actually made up the theatres (at Minack ‘stone’ and in the next section of this chapter ‘willow’) in terms of their existence as actual ‘materials’ rather than as a more abstract materiality (Ingold 2011: 32). Theatre phenomenologist Bert States draws on Victor Shklovsky to ask what it is that makes ‘stone *stony*’ (1985: 21 [original emphasis]) but, for Ingold, stoniness ‘*emerges through the stone’s involvement in its total surroundings—including you, the observer—and from the manifold ways in which it is engaged in the currents of the lifeworld.*’ (2011: 32 [original italics]). The gap between the terms used to describe the landscape at Minack and the effects perceived as arising from a relationship with the landscape begin to suggest some of the affective agency of the place.

Most agreed that Minack was ‘beautiful’, ‘stunning’, ‘unique’, ‘wonderful’, or ‘breath-taking’.¹ In 49 interviews at Minack, each of these words was mentioned multiple times: ‘beautiful’, 12; ‘stunning’, 8; ‘unique’, 15; ‘wonderful’, 16; and ‘breath-taking’, 3. Sally Mackey’s study of student experiences of working at Minack also finds the landscape repeatedly referred to as ‘beautiful’, however much she observes that this beauty must be a particular cultural construct (2002: 13). Mackey asks, ‘We appear to have a deeply ingrained love of beauty in nature but *why* do we respond so vibrantly to beautiful landscape and what happens to make this response so powerful?’ (14 [original emphasis]), and the responses she identifies amongst her students have to do with ideas of escape from the city to a rural leisure space (14); a Romantic ‘un-selfing’ and ‘desire for self-knowledge’ (15); pleasure landscapes of the eighteenth century; and the ancient significance of rock and water (15). Similar themes might be traced onto the audience examples I have looked at, although for audience members the experience of a performance was even more short-lived than that of a student working in the landscape. Also, the audience members included an assortment of those on holidays and locals who attended the theatre more regularly. Nevertheless, they repeatedly referred to the landscape as beautiful and appeared to be moved by being in a place they associated romantically with leisure time. Minack wears its natural/cultural history materially then: the story of its founder is laid out in the visitor centre, and the ‘ancient significance of rock and water’ to which Mackey refers is present in both the Logan rock and the sea visible behind the stage area, and in pseudo-Celtic patterns carved into the theatre’s concrete seating, passing as granite.

Beautiful was demanding, though. It might have *looked* beautiful, but it *felt* like hard work. In this first part of the ethnography I want to emphasise the inseparability of the aesthetic experience of landscape from the embodied experience of place. For Edward Casey,

who builds on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's embodied phenomenology, 'knowledge of place begins with the bodily experience of being-in-place' (2009: 46), and Tilley argues that 'The physicality of landscapes acts as a ground for all thought and social interaction' (2010: 26). Accordingly, the lived experience of place at Minack was physical in a manner to which many of the theatregoers were unaccustomed. Many audience members interviewed post-performance were unused to the exertion of ascending steep, uneven steps in the dark evening air and were breathless arriving in the car-park. Their experiences of place were inherently physical, affecting the breathing body in practical ways. Jennie laughed, 'It's hard work! Well, I'm 70 so the steps were very hard' (3 July 2014), Ben and Mary conversed: 'You need to work up to it. You need to get in training, I think [*laughter*]/ Cushions and cups of tea! Yes, you need the equipment and you need... yes... the whole experience' (3 July 2014), and Rosie reflected, 'I'd definitely bring a pillow next time' (3 July 2014). Minack Trust Chairman Charles Sinclair points out that the theatre 'tests people more than most public spaces and therefore our threshold of disability is different', explaining that many theatregoers need assistance at Minack where they might not at another theatre (Minack DVD 2013). Minack's extended disabled balcony, positioned high up from the stage, means that while no one is excluded from the theatre, sightlines are affected by a person's physical mobility. Minack demanded embodied practices of its audiences and the 'felt, touched and embodied' knowledge Mike Crang calls for in his work on haptic geographies (2003: 502) was inseparable from the lived experience of place at the theatre. To return to Casey, orienting ourselves in place, living in place is always an embodied experience:

Without the good graces and excellent services of our bodies, not only would we be lost in place—acutely disorientated and confused—we would have no coherent sense of place itself. Nor could there be any such thing as *lived* places, i.e. place in which we live and move and have our being. (2009: 48)

Comments about the physical experience of being an audience member at Minack often transitioned into aesthetic appreciations of the place, circuitously returning to the description of the landscape as 'beautiful'. According to Abram, 'Whether ecstatic or morose, exuberant or exhausted, everything swerves and trembles; anguish, equanimity, and pleasure are not first internal moods but passions granted to us by the capricious terrain' (2010: 50). Audience members' aesthetic responses to the theatre were inseparable from the physical experience of the landscape, even when they conceived of the terrain as apart or distant from their perceiving bodies. Kellie explained, 'It's tiring on the way out but it's exciting views and when the weather's great like it is today it really makes it something else' (7 June 2013) and David said, 'Inevitably the seats are hard so that's a bit of an endurance test but, having said that on one side, you couldn't ask for a better experience' (7 June 2013). Ben continued, 'It was lovely

having the background... backdrop behind... I'm out of breath... that's part of the experience' (3 July 2014) and Mary enthused, 'I loved it. Just the fact that you're sat outside and you've got the elements all around you and the sea so it was all fitting. Very atmospheric. Very' (3 July 2014). Giles too evidenced interconnectedness between the physical experience of the theatre and an aesthetic appreciation of both landscape and performance when he said:

You need some stamina – getting up from below [*laughter*]. And you need to be prepared, em, you know, in terms of how comfortable you feel and refreshments. The winds and the elements, which are always important, particularly, are of significance when you see a performance of something in the background during a significant soliloquy, you know. (7 June 2013)

Audience members spoke about their experiences of Minack, then, from within the landscape, as both physical and aesthetic experiences of place. Landscape became place, recalling Cresswell (2004: 10), and audience members described themselves, as Abram suggests, 'not above, but in the very midst of this living field' (2010: 47 [original emphasis]). The physical experience of Minack was enmeshed with aesthetic and imagined responses to the wider place.

How Shakespeare matters at Minack

While many audience members were aware that Minack had been originally created for Shakespeare, only some were visiting specifically for his plays. Vague and muddled allusions to a 'Shakespearean' performance space were occasionally mentioned in descriptions of the theatre. Steve and Patsy conversed:

Steve: It's just like a Shakespearean theatre, really but cut out of the rocks.

Patsy: Yes, the arches, I guess, give it like a...like almost a Roman appeal.

Steve: It's just totally unique, as Patsy said. We have never seen anything like it before and we've been to Shakespeare's theatre in London and this is just totally different. (6 June 2013)

Typically, Shakespeare was only a small part of how most audience members imagined the theatre. Their 'entry narratives' (Falk in Jackson 2011: 11)—the stories about the place that people brought with them to the place—were more often than not unrelated to Shakespeare or to the play being performed. In diminishing importance, audience members indicated that they were drawn to Shakespeare at Minack by the unique situation of the theatre, the timing of their holidays, the weather on a given day, prior memories of the theatre, Shakespeare generally, and, lastly, the play. Asked about the appeal of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Laura responded, 'Well, obviously the setting. The setting and the play. We like Shakespeare. We're

not good with Shakespeare but we enjoy watching' (7 June 2013). For Hazel, the theatre was the reason for the visit and any Shakespeare would have sufficed. She explained, 'It was a combination of us being in Cornwall. And the theatre. And the play. So it was probably being in Cornwall was the first catalyst. Yeah. And I think if it had been any Shakespeare play we would have come to it' (7 June 2013).

For many holidaymakers, neither Shakespeare nor the play was a particular draw. Not surprisingly, many were keen to see 'something' performed at Minack and would have attended irrespective of whatever coincided with their time in Cornwall. Clare had decided to see *Antony and Cleopatra* because the weather was good. She admitted 'Well, actually, we're here by accident more or less. Because we came this morning just to have coffee and then we sort of chatted about it and we thought 'Oh well, if there's free seats—spare seats not free seats—we might as well see if there are any tickets left'' (7 June 2013). At *The Taming of the Shrew* on tour in September 2013, Mark explained, 'Well, we're on holiday down in Cornwall so we thought we've never been to an open-air theatre, particularly built into the cliffs so, em, as it's sort of... we're down here, why not? So we booked up in advance. We wouldn't normally go to the theatre' (13 September 2013) and Sam reflected, 'I think the experience of coming here is more important than the play was. So, you know... that the visit was more important than the play' (13 September 2013). There were some who indicated that they might have preferred not to see Shakespeare at all. Dawn said, 'We would have liked to have come next week to *Iolanthe* but realized that *The Taming of the Shrew* was, you know, equally good so we thought we'd just come and watch the show' (13 September 2013). Locals could afford to be a little more selective about what they attended, although some Friends of the theatre attended all performances in a season. Unique among the responses, *Antony and Cleopatra* particularly appealed to Flo and Ryan, although the performance also coincided with their holidays: they had not arranged their holidays with a view to seeing this play. They discussed:

Evelyn: So what was the appeal of the event for you this evening?

Ryan: Well, it's Shakespeare, isn't it?

Flo: Yeah.

Ryan: So it's always a challenge to just kind of keep abreast of what exactly is happening, you know... because of the language... because it's a different time. It's...it's not immediately obvious what's going on. I know this play as well as any Shakespeare play and I mustn't have heard it for twenty some years but for me it's still a challenge to understand everything that's going on.

Flo: But I love it. I love, love, love this play so much. (6 June 2013)

The point is that enthusiasm for Shakespeare at Minack needs to be understood as proportionate to the enthusiasm for the theatre as a place. Henri Lefebvre argues that ‘the tourist, the passive spectator, can grasp but a pale shadow’ (1991: 137) of a space, compared with those who use spaces for work and come to know them through repetitive lived experience. While it would be fair to say that audience members came to know Minack less well than those who worked there for longer periods of time, memories of Minack—even for the transient audience member—suggested an experience more significant than a ‘pale shadow’.³⁹ Hilary explained, ‘Well, I have been here before and I just love it. I mean I love the setting. The whole feeling of the place’ (7 June 2013) and Sarah, her companion, continued, ‘I saw Shakespeare here before and I wanted to see Shakespeare again so we booked for the first Shakespeare performance of the summer’ (7 June 2013). Some were returning to the theatre after many years. Robert recalled his first chance visit to Minack and a performance of *King Lear* by the West Cornwall Theatre Company that had remained vivid in his memory; a memory that drew him back to the theatre many years later. He recounted:

I last visited in 1974. Quite a long time ago. And I had never heard of the Minack theatre before and I just saw the sign and I thought, ‘Oh, I’ll go and have a look at that’ and I was just blown away by it and I thought I must go to a performance here. So I went to the *King Lear* that night and that created this sort of fantastic memory in my mind from thirty-nine years ago of what it was like and so that’s why I wanted to come back for that experience. (7 June 2013)

For Robert, the memory of Minack, although only a fleeting encounter with Shakespeare in the theatre space, remained a profound experience. Laura and Richard recalled their previous visit to Minack in relation to Shakespeare too, in a more recent memory. They discussed: ‘Well, actually, it was last September, wasn’t it? What was it – *Macbeth*? / Yeah. It was a bit weird. [Laughter]/ Yeah. We quite like the more traditional Shakespeare’ (7 June 2013). The performance that Laura and Richard were talking about was Cube Theatre Company’s 2012 *Macbeth*, which Jackson indicated had been so divisive among audiences as to prompt a lengthy Facebook debate (Jackson 2013). This kind of critical engagement with the performances was unusual in the feedback at Minack, however, and no Shakespeare in 2013 or 2014 provoked a similar social media response. Upon arrival at Minack, then, the tourist/ audience member tended to respond physically and aesthetically to the landscape, while only superficially engaging with Shakespeare.

³⁹ At Minack I also encountered individuals working in the landscape. A different kind of ethnography could spend time with those who labour at Minack and articulate another kind of embodied and imagined engagement with place.

But even when people were not drawn to Minack specifically for Shakespeare or a particular play, what did they take from Shakespeare when they were there and how did the Shakespeare impinge on the way they spoke about the places? I look now at comments audiences for Moving Stories production of *The Tempest* that played at Minack between 30th June and 2nd July 2014 and find that their responses to the play in the living landscape were a part of the way they spoke about the wider experience of the place at Minack.

Moving Stories' *The Tempest*, sea and stones



Fig 1.2. Moving Stories' *The Tempest*, Minack, photograph by Bardo Creative (2014)

Many audience members at Moving Stories' *The Tempest* had some prior knowledge that Minack had been originally constructed for a performance of this play. Asked to describe the relationship between the performance and environment, Nicolette responded, 'Well, *The Tempest* lends itself very much to performance here. I believe it was the very first play that was performed here. It relates very well' (3 July 2014). Danielle explained, 'Oh, I mean I... I absolutely wanted to come to Minack and when I saw *The Tempest* was on, which it proved to be... absolutely made it. This theatre is absolutely made for this play' (3 July 2014). For Deirdre and Gerry:

Deirdre: I thought it was excellent. Apparently it was the first play that was put on here and I felt it... yeah... it was... You've got all the rocky shore and the waves and...Yes, it was perfect for me.

Gerry: I think in terms of location...This is the perfect location for *The Tempest*. I don't think there can be many better locations than this one. (2 July 2014)

Lucy continued in a similar vein, acknowledging the contradictions inherent in the natural feel of the unnatural theatre:

Well with *The Tempest* in particular, obviously it's set on an island. It kind of does give you that feeling. Yeah, it kind of...It's just not a standard theatre background basically. It is kind of a natural setting. I know it's all artificially built but it does feel like a natural setting where you're sat. (3 July 2014)⁴⁰

Paul explained how the environment affected his response to the play, saying, 'Being in the open air gave it an extra romance and a perfect feeling of freedom and expecting something slightly different as well' (3 July 2014). This kind of perceived complementarity between the play's thematic content and the landscape recurred throughout audience responses; not quite evincing any one of Tschumi's 'conflict, indifference or reciprocity' (Pearson 2010: 38). Audience members frequently suggested that they derived pleasure from the parallels between the environment and the play's imagery. Olivia explained, 'I think in the first act when the storm was... when Prospero conjured up the storm... the tempest... And I think in terms of location here and the tempest being conjured up, that was perfect interaction between text and location' (2 July 2014). Sabina enjoyed the opening scene for similar reasons, saying, 'At the beginning where there was the tempest it was great because there was the waves on the rocks and it felt like really, really good with the play' (2 July 2014). Peter described his response to the fictitious storm with reference to the sight and sounds of sea and rocks:

The start of the whole thing where you are getting into it... being brought into a frame of mind that the storm is raging...there's going to be this massive shipwreck that's coming and you're looking down, you're seeing the rocks, you're seeing the waves. I mean you've got a real audio visual experience going on there and I think that's what struck me. (3 July 2014)

Owen considered the loneliness of island life, describing the relationship between the play and environment as, 'Very closely linked. Especially because it's this play. It's very helpful to literally have it on a seaside island. It helped relate that isolation that they must have felt... seeing that there is nothing in front of us apart from the barren seascape' (2 July 2014). For both Peter and Owen, then, the landscape at Minack brought about imaginative responses to the play.

Some audience members picked up on moments when the production attempted to acknowledge and incorporate the landscape into the performance. Brian noted Ariel's conjuring of the storm, explaining, 'Because they definitely... they didn't ignore the fact that they were outside and looking onto the ocean. Ariel cast his magic out onto the ocean and

⁴⁰ There are some similarities here to what Mackey finds among her students at Minack. Mackey notes that, among the students of her study, 'Few separated the presence of the hand-carved theatre from the more natural aspects of the scenery. There was a sense of the two collaborating; the landscape was more powerful because of the presence of the theatre and, of course, vice versa' (2002: 13).

they would look out onto the ocean and yeah... It was very linked in that way' (2 July 2014). Rosie also felt that the performance 'utilized' the space well, the space complementing the performance. She enthused, 'This play is out of the ordinary. I think the language and nature. It's a magic...it's one of the magical plays. [...] It's quite good how they used the space, how they integrated it with the place.' (3 July 2014). 'Not ignoring' being outdoors, however, is subtly different to proactively responding to place; the former is not quite the same as indifference, but neither does it suggest a relationship between performance and space that is entirely reciprocal or in conflict (Pearson 2010: 38). 'Not ignoring' in this instance was perhaps more akin to a relationship of co-inhabitation, of sharing the space, of being alongside and in relation to the materialities of the space, without setting out expressly to be so.

There was a sense that a kind of happenstance complementarity, occasioned by moments when Shakespeare's text felt suitable in the landscape, when the landscape seemed to house certain parts of the performance, temporarily allowed the plays to seem at home within the larger 'assemblage' (Bennett 2010: 23) of lively and active matter in the space. Audience responses suggested that the landscape enhanced the play's nature imagery—those spoken images that were also materially present in the landscape—and brought them into focus through the lens of the play. Ian reflected, 'The themes that Shakespeare brings...most of them are natural as well in the kind of metaphors with the sea and nature versus nurture, which is a good place to have that idea' (2 July 2014). Deirdre and Gerry discussed: 'For me I find the words, Shakespeare's words are wonderful /I'm just thinking for the right words, never mind Shakespeare's words! But the language... I really enjoyed listening to the language of Shakespeare. So much of the vocabulary is related to ocean and tempest and storm and that's what's so special about it' (2 July 14). The text was perceived as having a relationship with the theatre, independent of physical actions of the performance. The performance was always viewed as a vehicle for the text, but audience members drew their own connections between text and space, without the performers doing much more than the play in the place.

On first inspection, this comes dangerously close to an erasure of local specificity in response to a generic Shakespeare's 'nature'. Shakespeare scholar John Gillies argues that 'There is little sense of realistic landscape in *The Tempest*, and that landscape varies according to the mind that perceives it' (1994: 112). So when *The Tempest* was transported to a literal and living landscape at Minack at the edges of the Atlantic, the 'real' landscape was temporarily appropriated as Prospero's island, inscribed with the Shakespeare narrative and recalling Dobson's troubling accusation that Minack claims the whole of Britain as

Shakespeare's (2011: 181). But there also seems to be something in excess of a claiming of landscape for Shakespeare that has to do with audience members thinking in terms of place rather than simply a performance at Minack. I consider theatrical scenery and landscape in more depth in Chapter Four, but for now I would just like to note the contradictions between the physical and imagined responses to the coastal landscape at Minack.

A further example helps to show how Shakespeare in performance at Minack was secondary to the experience of place, and how the performance was always already enmeshed in more-than-human ecologies, Shakespeare's agency comparatively weak when considered as distributed among the rest of the vibrant matter that made up the landscape. As Bennett puts forward, 'to acknowledge nonhuman materialities as participants in a political ecology is not to claim that everything is always a participant, or that all participants are alike' (2010: 108) and in this regard it makes sense to see the performances at Minack as possessing only a certain amount of influence, always relational. If the real sea influenced reception at *The Tempest*, for instance, so too did a manufactured sea. Moving Stories' production began with recorded sounds of waves and thunder and the perceived success or failure of these recorded sound effects divided audience members.⁴¹ Some heard the recorded effects as integrated with the sounds of the Atlantic below, delighting in the attempt to mimic nature through technology. Kathy and Arun felt positive about the recorded effects played out against the real sounds in the space:

Kathy: We didn't know if the sound effects were sound effects or if they were the sea. I was completely into it.

Arun: Well the sky suddenly darkened towards the end and they started playing thunder across the thing and I wasn't sure if it was thunder out on the bay or on the sound system. It was so integrated... It was beautifully...

Kathy: It enhanced it all. It brought it all in together. (3 July 2014)

Ana also explained that she enjoyed the sound effects 'because you could listen to the sound effects and probably some of them were coming from the sea but it really did add to the atmosphere' (3 July 2014). Sea, sounds, and play were thought of as multiple tracks playing in counterpoint but making one integrated audio soundscape. But for Harry, however, the recorded sound effects were superfluous given the presence of the 'real' sea below:

Well anything done here is rather special because of the environment but I didn't really think it contributed to the play. The play was almost separate from the

⁴¹ Minack has developed its own sound system to allow voices to be amplified throughout the theatre. Jackson explains that, as well as settings for musicals and plays, the sound system at Minack includes a setting for 'for a play with noisy sea' where sound is amplified for those in the auditorium closest to the sea (Jackson 2013).

environment. They were even playing sounds of the sea, which was unnecessary. The relationship should have been really strong because it's to do with being on an island and you feel, sitting here, that you could easily be on an island but... no. I didn't think it kind of gave out to the surroundings. (3 July 2014)

Harry experienced disjuncture between the performance and the space, but this was secondary to his experience of being in place at Minack. For Harry, the contradictions between what was 'of the place' and what was 'brought to the place' and the 'friction' of their meeting oddly arose from the effort to complement the space with recorded sound effects (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 111 [original emphasis]). It seemed that here the 'real' nature, the sea, the rocks, and the sounds they made, some of the 'vibrant matter' of the material landscape, were also active alongside the technologies utilized by the performance. There was no wholesale appropriation or domination of the one over the other, subject/ object distinctions were harder to pinpoint than a commixture of 'actants' within an 'assemblage' that might be understood as comprising granite, concrete, sea, gulls, *The Tempest*, disposable teacups, grass, weather, raincoats, actors, and audience members, among whom agency was variously distributed (Bennett 2010: 9-12).

Responses to Shakespeare in performance at Minack were part of a wider experience of place, then, that incorporated various entry-narratives, embodied, and imagined experiences. To attend to the presentation of Shakespeare in the landscape at Minack was to attend to the space, to the performance in the space, and to one's own embodied manoeuvrings in the space. Audiences did not expect performance to outperform nature at Minack. They liked the moments when the performance was sympathetic to nature and when nature appeared sympathetic to performance. They liked being *at* the performances even when they did not like the performances. There were problematic harnessings of the landscape at the theatre by practitioners and audience members, anthropocentrically seen to be serving the play (and I discuss these in more detail in Chapter Four), although the actual success of any appropriations from the perspective of an audience member was haphazard and unpredictable. As the responses to birds, sea, weather, and landscape discussed in Chapters Three and Four corroborate, Shakespeare's stamp on Minack is fainter than Dobson suggested.

Lefebvre sees tourism as a '*consumption of space*' (1991: 353 [original emphasis]), which seems an apt description of what transient audience members do at Minack, but he also notes some limited transformative potential within such consumed spaces at the same time. In such tourist spaces, Lefebvre writes, 'set aside for leisure, the body regains a certain right to use' (353), and he concedes that even if such spaces 'have the middle classes as their only

foundation, their only vehicle, and that these middle classes offer models of consumption to the so-called lower classes, in this case such mimesis may, under the pressure of the contradiction in question, be an effective stimulus' (353-354). Not all tourist spaces can be said to have the middle classes as their foundation any more—although arguably Minack still does. Later chapters attend more to what the potential of such an 'effective stimulus' might be, but for now it suffices not to dismiss the tourist/audience member's experience of Minack as wholly appropriative or consumptive. Audience members uttered experiences of place at Minack that appeared to simultaneously exemplify and be in excess of both of these things.

I leave Cornwall temporarily now, travelling up though England, crossing the Severn Valley Bridge and driving into Wales and the Brecon Beacon mountains in search of another theatre built from nature for Shakespeare.

The Willow Globe



Fig. 1.3. Willow Globe exterior, photograph by Mark Nesbitt (2013)

Actors Sue Best and Philip Bowen formed their theatre company Shakespeare Link in 1992, gaining charitable status in 1994 for broad social objectives linked to Shakespeare and education. In 2006 they planted a living willow theatre modelled on the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe in London on their working, organic farm, Penlanole. Surrounded and sheltered by the Wye and Elan Valleys, the Willow Globe, or Glób Byw, fuses the idea of

found space with a constructed theatre.⁴² Local landscaper and actor Ben Aires recalled the original marking out of the theatre, speaking of a relationship between people and the ‘green plot’ chosen for the theatre before the willow was planted:

I think Penlanole is officially translated as meaning something like ‘the head of the bright place’. We think people have been settled here for a really long time. The willow theatre itself – right from the moment it was marked out on the ground – had children playing in it. Way before it actually was completed as a circle or anything, it was attracting people to it. (26 May 2013)

As Abram reminds his readers, though, ‘culture can impose its patterns only within the constraints set by the biosphere itself’ (2010: 127) and lime had to be added to the soil to assist the willow in its initial growth.⁴³

The Willow Globe is formed of inner and outer circles woven in deciduous willow arches, forming a twenty-sided geometric structure. There are two entrances at the back of the auditorium, two either side of a tiring house and a balcony, also planted in living willow. Around the thrust stage, staggered wooden benches seat up to one hundred and fifty people. The gentle movement of the willow rods makes a softer frame than the wooden O of Shakespeare’s Globe or the camouflage walls of Regent’s Park’s Open Air Theatre in London. Rising beyond the tops of the willow, trees stretch to the sky from the fields beyond. The Willow Globe is literally alive. The theatre grows fourteen feet a year and takes two people three weeks to prune every March. Birdsong fills the theatre, loudest at dawn and dusk, and the insistent whisper of wind in the willows continues through the night, as do bleating sheep and occasional vehicles on the A470.⁴⁴ Swallows and blackbirds fly through the boughs, midges hover in still weather, and people do Shakespeare in the summer, all sharing the same living habitat. Blackfly have been occasional, unwelcome squatters.

In the foyer space between the square willow walls and the theatre, a meadow is planted with wildflowers that would have grown during ‘Shakespeare’s Day’.⁴⁵ A physic

⁴² In 1997 Pearson observed that theatre buildings were few in Wales (in Taylor 1997: 94-95), suggesting that Welsh theatre had responded either by making mobile performances or by creating work in found spaces. Culture Shift Wales, a report undertaken on sustainability and Welsh theatre in 2014 affirms the continued usage of found spaces in Wales (2014).

⁴³ In 2011 Powys County Council granted planning permission for a change of land usage at Penlanole, where the Willow Globe is planted, from ‘agricultural’ to ‘agricultural and entertainment’ (Powys 2011).

⁴⁴ I can attest to this noise throughout the night, having camped for several nights on the farm during summers 2013 and 2014.

⁴⁵ Ursula Bowen, a retired lecturer in Environmental Biology, had suggested a wildflower meadow to complement the theatre and to encourage biodiversity in light of the demise of wildflower meadows in the U.K. since the mid-twentieth century. The remit for the Willow Globe’s ‘organic tribute to the bard!’ (Bowen 2012: 2) was extended from flowers named in Shakespeare’s plays to ‘native wildflowers which would have been growing in Elizabethan hay meadows’ (1) to accommodate

garden is planted according to each of the four humours and a Shakespeare nature trail is laid out in surrounding woods, with chalked slates marking plants of note with quotations from his plays. A grazing field doubles as a car-park (the Willow Globe is a smaller operation than Minack, open only on performance days) and stables provide indoor performance space, a library, wardrobe, box office, and a licensed bar. When I attended *All's Well That Ends Well* in May 2013, I was welcomed as a visitor camped on the farm. The theatre's arches were semi-translucent and sunlight flashed through the moving leaves, with thousands of light shafts streaming from the circumference to dapple the interior. I returned on a wet weekend in May 2014 for *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and again in a warmer June that year, when the arches were more densely filled, separating the inside of the outdoor theatre from the farm outside.

Radnorshire is the least densely populated county in England and Wales and Shakespeare Link and the Willow Globe provide a gathering place for a diverse rural community with common interests in Shakespeare, theatre, and nature.⁴⁶ As well as an annual Shakespeare performed by the resident Willow Globe Company, the theatre acts as a receiving house for touring performances. Theatre Company The Factory and director Tim Carroll, with whom Best and Bowen have a long-established relationship, visit most years. In 2013 a group of LAMDA graduates camped on-site for a week and created a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* for the theatre. Although Best was brought up in Wales, she and Bowen have largely English theatre backgrounds. Both toured with Michael Bogdanov's English Shakespeare Company before returning to/ settling in Penlanole and many of the sounds of Shakespeare at the Willow Globe are subsequently in Received Pronunciation, with occasional Welsh accents audible too. Arguably then, some of the criticisms that Kent levelled at Minack might be transferrable to the Willow Globe, as another nature-theatre built for Shakespeare in a postcolonial part of Britain. My proposition, however, is that, as at Minack, the lived experience of place for audience members at the Willow Globe complicates any such critique.

The activities at the Willow Globe are more outward looking than any easy charges of cultural imperialism might suggest and audience members always contextualized the ways they spoke about the performances within a wider experience of the place there. The theatre's green ethos looks to the future as much as it draws on the past: environmental objectives

volunteers' enthusiasm for the project. Bowen sadly passed away in summer 2015 and the garden has since been dedicated to her memory.

⁴⁶ The population density of Brecon and Radnorshire in 2010 was approximately twenty-three persons per square kilometre, according to the 2011 Census, making it the least densely populated constituency in England and Wales. (ONS 2011).

complement a wider interest in Shakespeare's environments—both the environment Shakespeare would have inhabited and the environment referenced within his plays.⁴⁷ The theatre is powered by on-site solar panels and a wind turbine; a borehole in a neighbouring field provides water. Outside the stables, a noticeboard outlines the theatre's green energy objectives and modestly suggests that the Willow Globe is 'probably the first static theatre facility in the UK powered by a stand-alone energy system'. Also, the theatre's programming includes an eclectic range of performances, many of which directly address ecological concerns: alongside Shakespeare, the 2014 season included a reworking of José Antonio Jauregui and Eduardo Jauregui's *Humans on Trial: An Ecological Fable* (performed by local young people)—an ecologically focussed piece of theatre—and a series of creative-writing workshops linked to seasonal agricultural cycles. Furthermore, Best and Bowen are committed to pursuing Shakespeare Link's socially engaged educational charitable objectives. Bowen studies the Welsh language and was appointed High Sheriff of Powys for 2014-2015. He explained, 'What I really want to do with Shakespeare Link is help people understand they do not necessarily need to go to those big theatres all the time to enjoy the plays – the plays are for all of us' (26 July 2013). Like Minack, then, and despite its physical roots in the ground, the Willow Globe was more representative of the flows in and out of a place—of Doreen Massey's 'global sense of place' (1993)—than it was rooted in any sense of stability, fixity, or boundedness.

A 'midgey' and magical enclosure

While the distinction between people who worked on the land and those who visited the landscape was fairly clear cut at Minack, labour and leisure were more closely integrated at the Willow Globe: many of those making up Willow Globe audiences were also involved with the theatre on a more regular basis. Several of those to whom I spoke during the first year were also present the following year (as performers and audience members) and some remembered me and my research project. This is not to suggest that there was an entirely consistent 'insider' audience at the Willow Globe, but that a greater proportion of the people attending the theatre here were also involved with other aspects of the theatre's work, with considerably fewer tourists.

⁴⁷ At the Willow Globe, Sue Best recounts Shakespeare's 'mistake' in *The Winter's Tale*, when the Clown laments about his sheep 'tis by the seaside, browsing of ivy' (3, 3, 65-66). Sheep, Best explains, do not usually eat ivy, but ecologists visiting the Willow Globe have identified a form of ivy native to Wales that sheep *do* eat. Best's suggestion is that Shakespeare may not have been mistaken but actually drawing from his experience of the countryside west of Stratford-upon-Avon (2013).

As at Minack, audience members communicated a haptic experience of the Willow Globe in both embodied and aesthetic responses to the performance events. Whereas Minack's proximity to the sea meant that it was less prone to midges, insect attack was a greater cause of concern for Willow Globe audiences. Prior to *All's Well*, Ursula and Peggy described their preparations for the performance, saying, 'We've got a winter coat on and something to put on your knees and something to sit on. A cushion./ And something to protect you from the midges, which can be very nasty. [...] Last time I came I got thoroughly bitten. All in my hair. For days afterwards. Avoiding that this time' (25 May 2013). Paul mentioned the midges too when he spoke about the physical demands of the theatre, saying, 'We've come to... I can't remember how many performances we've come to... We've suffered the midges, we've suffered the cold, we've been distracted by the birds flying over but it's always been worthwhile and a great experience' (26 May 2013). Here Paul's embodied memory of midges and cold temperatures segued into visual observations of the place. But audience members' memories of physical responses to the theatre were not limited to memories of prior performances. Aires, for instance, who prunes the willow in March, brought the memory of that task with him to a summertime performance. Recollecting his work on the theatre, he explained, 'It's evil. Evil in the biting wind and the snow and stuff and you're going up there on these really big ladders and you have to full reach as well. Next time I do it I'd make it a little easier to work on!' (26 May 2013). As at Minack, memories of prior performances seemed to respond to the place in the present moment, supporting Alex Goodbody's assertion that memories of place often reveal 'as much about the present needs and desires of the remembering subject as they do about the past' (2011: 58). As Tilley argues, 'The manner in which we understand places differs inevitably according to how we encounter them from within and the routes we take to reach places and the sequences of other places we experience along the way' (2010: 27). The embodied memories of the Willow Globe that accompanied audience members' routes into the place invariably and inevitably affected their responses to being 'within' the theatre in the present moment. If any kind of quaintly rural Shakespeare was anticipated, the lived experience of the theatre left them bitten and bruised.

Seasonal changes at the Willow Globe were considered aesthetically as well as physically. Naomi, who had visited the theatre earlier in the year but had yet to see a performance there, observed, 'When I saw the space it was pretty bare so now it's much greener, which is great. It's filled out. So of course the space is carefully woven and as it fills out in the summer it becomes even better and better' (25 May 2013). In May, Nathan, who acted in *All's Well* and was in *Merry Wives*' audience, also spoke about how seasonal changes affected sounds in the theatre, saying:

It's different in this theatre, especially when it's like this – it's not fully grown. So there's a lot of gaps and you can kind of feel your voice disappearing through the walls so it's quite hard to balance being loud enough for everyone to hear. [...] When it's fully grown in a couple of months it will be almost completely opaque and then it will hold it in. Apart from the bit above you so then you feel like you're more in some sort of bowl or maybe at the bottom of a green well almost. (25 May 2013)

No less vehement about the unique qualities of the outdoor theatre space than Minack audiences, Willow Globe audiences tended to describe the theatre in more personal terms than the awestruck utterances evoked by the open landscape at Minack. Where Minack felt vast, the Willow Globe felt intimate, enclosed within its porous willow walls. For Richard, interviewed outside the stables after *Merry Wives*, the theatre evoked memories of childhood hideaways created in nature.

It reminded me a bit like a den or something that I would have as a kid. And as kids we would go out into the fields or the nearby woods or whatever and make a little den, a little kind of shelter or what-not. I think because there was a lot of shade in it and because it was quite tall and kind of sheltered a little bit. But I mean, saying that, there was no roof on it, obviously. So yeah, it felt like a little kind of hideaway but at the same time it felt like a kind of an outdoor patio or somebody's back garden. (22 June 2014)

It is interesting that the examples Richard used for comparison included both rural and urban outdoor spaces—and den and patio—both of which represent enclosed and private spaces. *Merry Wives*' director Tom Syms supported Richard's description of a sense of interiority at the outdoor Willow Globe, adding that entering the theatre was like 'crossing a border into another world' (2014). Although the Willow Globe is an outdoor space, the sense of crossing a threshold as one enters the theatre is more akin to entering an indoor theatre than it is to the experience of the vast and open landscape at Minack.

Extending from this sense of an interior-exteriority, where the expansive landscape at Minack was 'breath-taking', the Willow Globe was more often discussed in terms of 'magic'. Jennifer, for instance, described the Willow Globe as, 'Really magical. It's sort of another world. It's really special' (26 May 2013) and Simon explained, 'This is the home of the theatre. This is the theatre. It's got a kind of... it's got a kind of magic to it' (26 May 2013). Audience members regularly articulated the willow's contribution to their experience of this magical space and, like the stones and sea that were the 'materials' of Minack (Ingold 2011: 32), Willow Globe audiences appeared to respond to the willow of the structure itself: the willow's '*willownyness*'—appeared to bring about responses that were more than the experience of the performance of the play and simultaneously a part of the reported experience of the place. For instance, Megan began to point to the willow's contribution to making 'magic' when she explained:

Well I think it's quite a magical space because of the willow. The Willow Globe. It is quite unique. I've only ever seen it in, you know, planned gardens really, but to have it as a theatre setting is really quite, quite special, I think. It adds to the atmosphere and makes it something a bit more—I don't know—more grassroots. (26 May 2013)

Maura also described the theatre as unique because of the willow, saying:

It's something like you would not be able to imagine. You've actually got to see it, you've got to see the conception. [...] Because if you say 'Oh, there's willow wands, you know, which they've stuck in the ground and they've sprouted and they've now grown up' and it's... it's very, very difficult to describe because if you've never seen anything like it, there's nothing to associate it with. (25 May 2013)

She went on to explain that the willow and weather were generative of a certain personal response, elaborating, 'Well, I think being in the open air adds a dimension to it. It kind of, I don't know what the word is really, it kind of makes it more earthy and mysterious. Because you're sort of in the elements' (25 May 2013). Again, here, it would be easy to pounce. So many expressions of 'magic' at the Willow Globe come perilously close to being written-off as what Philip Auslander famously critiques as 'traditional, unreflective assumptions that fail to get much further in their attempts to explicate the value of 'liveness' than invoking clichés and mystifications like the 'magic of live theatre' (1999: 2). But, as Shakespearean ecocritic Robert Watson argues, 'In biology as in so many areas of early modern science, "magic" is the place-holder for phenomena with pending explanations' (2006: 36) and, in light of Bennett's argument for matter as lively, animate, and agentic, it might be also argued that 'magic' in these audience responses to the Willow Globe stands in for the affective vibrant matter of the theatre's materials. Such a 'magic' might be understood in terms of the 'earthy, not quite human capaciousness' (Bennett 2010: 3) of the willow, a material that always 'exceed[ed] its semiotics' (5). In Chapter Three I expand further upon affective atmospheres and in Chapter Four I look more closely at notions of enchantment (which might be considered an extension of this magic), but for now I want just to observe how much 'magic' was reported as a part of the audience experience of Willow Globe and how this magic appeared to derive in part from the theatre's vibrant materiality, from an awareness of the nonhuman as vital to this experience of place.

As well as magic, gently anthropomorphized ways of speaking about the Willow Globe went further than acknowledging the willow as animate in its own right and actually imbued it with human characteristics. Audience responses often suggested a collective sense of investment in the care and growth (literal and metaphorical) of the physical theatre: some of the language used to describe the theatre was reminiscent of a child's growing up. Dot, for instance, said, 'And I've been coming here for years because I used to do the costumes. So I've seen it from the willow being that high [*gestures towards the ground*] to what it is today'

(26 May 2013), while Trevor and Mel, who were visiting from London, remarked, 'I used to live here when it was first planted. /So we've seen it grow up' (26 May 2013). Lizzie and Alice also spoke with pride about the duration of their relationship with the Willow Globe, saying, 'We've seen it develop over the years and grow and grow—physically as well as in reputation—and it's just so idyllic up here that you could be absolutely anywhere in the world but we've got it on our doorstep. How fantastic is that?' (22 June 2014). More than being personified as a child, the Willow Globe was personalized with a playful character. Aires spoke about the theatre with a sense of its playfulness.

It is itself a really magical looking structure, as I'm sure you've noticed – especially this time of year when it's been cut back and it's looking all sinewy. It kind of looks like something out of a Terry Pratchett book. You can almost expect that overnight it might wander off somewhere else and come back again. So there's all of that before you even start thinking of the drama. (26 May 2013)

Thomas, in the audience for *Merry Wives*, described the theatre as playful too.

It's like a cheeky space, I think. So you can do kind of cheeky stuff with it, which is really nice. And I think it wants to be playful... And because the willow is a tree and it kind of falls and rustles and there's just something about it which is very... It's like... It's not stuffy and it's not conventional. It just feels quite childish and playful as a space. (22 June 2014)

Such responses might be carefully considered within the context of Bennett's somewhat controversial argument for a 'need to cultivate a bit of anthropomorphism—the idea that human agency has some echoes in nonhuman nature—to counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world' (2010: xvi). Bennett goes on to suggest that 'an anthropomorphic element in perception can uncover a whole world of resonances and resemblances – sounds and sights that echo and bounce far more than would be possible were the universe to have a hierarchical structure' (99). In anthropomorphising the Willow Globe, and especially when considered alongside the embodied experiences of the theatre, audience members seemed to arrive at some of the kind of useful anthropomorphising Bennett is advocating. This is not a violent, appropriative way of humanising nonhuman nature but seems instead to seek a language to articulate the structure's agency within human frames of reference. Humans may have planted the Willow Globe, culture may have imposed itself upon the physical space—even before the land was a theatre it was a farm—but nature was acknowledged as continuing to act of its own accord, with its own agency, contributing to how audience members imagined and experienced the theatre space. As at Minack, then, the willow 'material' (Ingold 2010: 32) used to make the theatre was perceived as 'vibrant' (Bennett 2010). The reported experience of the place emerged as more than the reported experience of the performance of a play by Shakespeare. Despite the performances at the Willow Globe not seeking

ecological ways of being-in-the-world (Simpson 2013: 181), audience members' aesthetic and physical responses to the theatre generated insights into what it is to be entangled and enmeshed in a more-than-human world. In the next section of this chapter, I extend the reading of place at the Willow Globe to consider how the way that Shakespeare was 'materially' written into the landscape at Penlanole brought about certain cultural responses to Shakespeare that differ from those at Minack and that further a different kind of ecocritical reading of the audience responses to place at this theatre.

Avant-garde nostalgia at the Willow Globe



Fig. 1.4. Willow Globe interior, photograph by Mark Nesbitt (2013)

Owing to Best's and Bowen's lifelong interests and expertise in Shakespeare and the ways in which Shakespeare is inscribed onto many parts of the farm at Penlanole, audience responses here tended to reference Shakespeare more than they did upon entry to Minack. It is worth noting that in the interviews at Minack the same sets of questions elicited no instance of anyone reporting a connection with an 'authentic' or 'original' Shakespeare through nature. While this does not suggest that such connections are never made at Minack, it does indicate the proportionate differences between the responses to Shakespeare given in these two theatres. For Naomi, Shakespeare and the Willow Globe were interconnected in the immediately experienced farm environment, its wider rural setting, and the idea that Shakespeare's writing was supported by the actual experience of nature:

I would say the environment is very fun to visit because it's set on a farm with sheep in the background and the hills in the background, fantastic views in the countryside [*horse neighs*] and noises and the theatre itself is woven in and part of the farm and the

garden and that just lends an extra something to the...to the theatrical experience and supports some of the themes of... of Shakespeare. (25 May 2013)

Charlie also felt that the content of Shakespeare's plays was suitable for outdoor performance. He suggested that historical practices supported outdoor performances today. Charlie described Shakespeare's work as, 'Earthy. A lot of it. Not all of it, but a lot of it is earthy. It just lends itself... And I think it was from that time. I mean if you look at the Globe that was an open top. This is based on the Globe. So that was the same sort of outdoors almost, wasn't it?' (22 June 2014). Dot made connections between Shakespeare and the theatre's architecture. She said, 'I think the whole theatre lends itself to Shakespeare, partly because it's in the round and partly the atmosphere of the willow. It really does lend itself to Shakespeare' (26 May 2013). When Barbara described the Willow Globe as 'so cleverly thought out...the use of the willow to make the shape. And the lovely octagonal around the stage. I mean the setting – you couldn't beat it, could you?' (25 May 2013), her companion, Ursula, followed by emphasising the space's Shakespearian credentials, saying, 'And the fact that it is actually a fifth of the size of Shakespeare's Globe theatre in London... of the original theatre in London. It's done to scale. It's not just put up in any old way. It's deliberately a fifth of the size' (25 May 2013). For Nathan, Shakespeare and original practices were at the heart of the work undertaken at the Willow Globe and the relationship with the reconstructed Globe—also a replica—in London was important too:

I just love the whole idea of it. At some point I'm going to make my way down to the real Globe in London and get that link with what we're doing up here. Obviously we're a replica of that Globe up here. I want to see the real Globe. I've seen it on television. I haven't seen it in real life. That kind of connection is what I'm looking for. Going backward to what Shakespeare was trying to do – what he was writing for. (25 May 2013)

Collectively, these remarks linking the present experience of the Willow Globe with an 'authentic' or 'original' Shakespeare might well be considered within a framework of nostalgia; what Susan Bennett refers to as a drawing on 'the past as a figure for the desires of the present' (1996: 3). For Bennett, 'in a British context at least, it is conspicuous how often Shakespeare performs the role which links the psychic experience of nostalgia to the possibility of reviving an authentic, naturally better, and material past (7). Svetlana Boym also notices that 'Nostalgia is something of a bad word, an affectionate insult at best' (2001: xiv). As far as Shakespeare and nostalgia are concerned, particularly in a British context, the tendency is towards regression; the absent past of Shakespeare's day is hazy, rosy, selective and in danger of veering towards nationalism. Without losing sight of the risks of nostalgia, though, there is a further context for nostalgia among Willow Globe audiences that incorporates not just a gazing back to a perceived Elizabethan golden age but also a

progressiveness that I suggest might be read productively within the framework of Kate Soper's 'avant-garde nostalgia' (2011: 23).

Soper invokes a 'provocatively contradictory notion' (23) of an avant-garde nostalgia in light of 'the Romantic reflection on vanished or vanishing times and spaces' (23), rejecting romanticized calls for a 'return to nature' but contending that 'there are aspects of [Romanticism] that could be harnessed to the development of a new politics of consumption organized around more sensually rewarding and ecologically progressive conceptions of pleasure and fulfilment' (17). Heeding Raymond Williams's warning against outright condemnations of nostalgia, Soper warns of the dangers of the 'simple-backward look' *and* the 'simple progressive thrust' (24). An avant-garde nostalgia, she posits, might contribute in our present ecologically-threatened moment 'by reflecting on past experience in ways that highlight what is pre-empted by contemporary forms of consumption, and thereby stimulate desire for a future that will be at once less environmentally destructive and more sensually gratifying' (24). Soper agrees with Theodor Adorno that 'So long as progress, deformed by utilitarianism, does violence to the surface of the earth, it will be impossible—in spite of all proof to the contrary—completely to counter the perception that what antedates the trend is in its backwardness better and more humane' (Adorno in Soper 2011: 24). The thrust of her argument is that longing for a more pleasurable, sustainable past (even a romanticized or imagined past) might prompt desire for a more pleasurable and sustainable future. While the pleasures of which Willow Globe audience members spoke were often yoked to a perceived connectedness to Shakespeare's day—nostalgically approximating the current conditions of performance with perceptions of past performances—this longing was located within a wider theme that encompassed pleasure arising from 'nature' more broadly.

Recurring across the interviews was a sense of pleasure derived from feeling part of a communal, informal event in an outdoor space and a feeling that this intimacy echoed the kinds of performances Shakespeare might have intended, written or known. Stephen Purcell argues that 'Such [nostalgic] desires often find themselves looking backwards to an imagined culture in which audiences experienced none of the fragmentation and alienation of contemporary life' but he concedes that nostalgia for an 'Elizabethan' audience experience 'is not, of course, completely unfounded on historical fact' (2009: 152). Much within the audience response I encountered echoes those arguments linking Shakespeare with a regressive nostalgia. But notwithstanding the important questions of politics, community, inclusion, and exclusion that they raise—particularly at the Willow Globe—there is an argument for also proposing an ecocritical context for nostalgia within the ethnography.

Amanda, for instance, explained that she loved the performance, ‘Well, because it is outside in the environment which Shakespeare would have experienced’ (25 May 2013), suggesting pleasure derived from a perceived getting ‘closer’ to Shakespeare in nature. Selwyn and Georgia conversed about the present nature and the nature of Shakespeare’s day. Selwyn began, ‘It’s a very intimate space. You feel very close to the stage. You feel part of the action. It feels realistic like it might have been in Shakespeare’s day’ (26 May 2013). Georgia went on to talk about the birdsong that was audible as she was speaking, elaborating, ‘And it’s lovely. You can hear the swallows and the birdsong. The swallows are usually diving around amongst the willow. It’s beautiful. Especially on a day like this’ (26 May 2013). Later chapters question the suggestion these performances ‘felt realistic’ but for now I would like to observe how Selwyn and Georgia’s responses integrate nostalgia for an intimate actor/ audience relationship, as well as pleasure derived from birds and weather in the living theatre. Barbara and Jane conversed, ‘I think that the audience and the players perhaps feel more at one within this green enclosure./ I think there is the timelessness of it as well. You know, there is the sense that this isn’t a building that was built in 1950 or something. This is... of course it’s made, but you could have had the same thing in Shakespeare’s time’ (22 June 2014). Shakespeare is unlikely to have either experienced or imagined a living willow theatre, although Tilley argues tentatively that sounds, smells, sights, and light and darkness do in a ‘limited sense [provide] a direct bodily connection with the past’ (2010: 30). Neither is it impossible that Shakespeare would have experienced ‘willow’; if this matters. What does matter here is that the living willow theatre facilitated a sense of continuity between ‘then’ and ‘now’ where ‘now’ was nice because it was like ‘then’.

The above responses are perhaps at risk of framing the reported experience of the Willow Globe as an idealized rural Shakespeare. But Paul drew more specific parallels between the wildlife of ‘Shakespeare’s day’ and the once-endangered red kites that fly across the circumference of the Willow Globe. He said:

I think it’s an extraordinary experience in which the living world shares in. We’ve got the kites, which were still present in London and were flying over the theatre in London when Shakespeare wrote the plays and here we are again seeing them in mid-Wales so that’s a lovely context. (26 May 2013)

Shakespeare’s references to kites were well-known by Willow Globe audiences; Lear’s Goneril is a ‘detested kite!’, a ‘hell-kite’ takes Macduff’s family in *Macbeth*, and Autolycus warns in *The Winter’s Tale*, ‘when the kite builds, look to lesser linen’; a reminder that this now protected bird of prey was, in Shakespeare’s day, considered a scavenging, verminous pest

that might steal your underwear as it was hanging out to dry.⁴⁸ Kites were persecuted to near-extinction under the 16th century vermin acts and their reintroduction to Wales's Elan Valley is one of Britain's greatest conservation success stories (Lovegrove 2007: 127). David Attenborough's introduction to the otherwise admonitory 2013 State of Nature report begins with the 'good news' that 'red kites and sea eagles soar where they have been absent for centuries' (2013: 8). As Paul responded to the kites at the Willow Globe, he did so within the context of his embodied experience of the theatre (insects and temperature) as well as his perceptions of the original performance conditions of the plays. There was a sense of delight in the continuity of nature so nearly lost that was part of the pleasure he derived from the immediately experienced performance. As part of the same conversation, Jane, an ecologist, also responded to the kites and to birdsong more generally at the Willow Globe. She explained:

For me I think, I imagine Shakespeare must have performed outside a lot when the natural world was much more around you. So to me, this takes the environment back to how it would have been when Shakespeare performed them. Like birdsong. Birdsong around the Globe in London now is virtually nil. I mean here with the kites. Shakespeare mentions kites in his words and I think wow to me it is the setting brings it more into how Shakespeare would relate to it so, um, I think it's a fantastic... I feel you're taken into the time when he wrote it, em, much more than most venues and often I think... you think... 'Gosh, what would Shakespeare think of seeing one of his plays here?' (26 May 2013)

Jane and Paul's not-uninformed perceptions of Shakespeare's (more biodiverse) natural world and the pleasure they derived from the present performance at the Willow Globe suggested both loss and desire. To use Soper's words, they were 'reflecting on past experience in ways that highlight what is pre-empted by contemporary forms of consumption' (2011: 24) and, in the process, enjoying a pleasurable present. My suggestion is that audience responses to Shakespeare at the Willow Globe simultaneously supported Bennett's assertion that Shakespeare conspires with a conservative nostalgia to revive 'an authentic, naturally better, and material past' (1996: 7) and with an avant-garde nostalgia that might potentially 'stimulate desire for a future that will be at once less environmentally destructive and more sensually gratifying' (Soper 2011: 24). Among Willow Globe audiences, nostalgia meandered between ahistorical longings for a blurry but better Shakespeare's time and space, and a desire for a more pleasurable and environmentally-engaged present. Shakespeare was interconnected with the experience of nature in an expression of place that was in excess of

⁴⁸ Richard Kerridge's chapter on 'An Ecocritic's Macbeth' in *Ecocritical Shakespeare* (2011: 193-210) also includes a discussion of the history of red kites, their past as pests and their present as restored wildlife, in his reading of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

the performances of the plays and suggestive of an ecocritical reading of Shakespeare arising from the place.

***The Merry Wives of Windsor* and fairies of the willow tree**

Finally, responses to performances of *Merry Wives* at the Willow Globe echo those moments of complementarity between performance content and setting identified at *The Tempest* at Minack; the happenstance complementarity that arose from a perceived thematic suitability rather than as a result of a sought after relationship of ‘conflict, reciprocity or indifference’ between performance and space. *Merry Wives* ends with Falstaff, dressed as a stag, at Herne’s oak in Windsor Forest—a ‘divine place’ David Wiles points out (2003: 24-25)—where local children dressed as ‘urchins, oafs and fairies’ (4, 4, 48) have been sent to humiliate him in an act of community revenge. As with the storm that opened *The Tempest*, many Willow Globe audience members commented on the scene at Herne’s oak, perceiving complementarity between the play’s fictional locale and the theatre’s material construction, without desiring the practitioners to ‘do’ anything particular to reference the connections. Winnie reflected:

You know, it’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. It’s fairly light but there’s also, you know, lots of sort of deep meanings there if you chose to search them out. Particularly perhaps the last scene with all the fairy sprites and the woodland creatures and you’re in the middle of a woodland setting in the middle of the countryside and there are lots of references to the countryside in the play. (22 June 2014)

Richard’s comments about the same scene also articulated a response to the play’s content in the setting of the Willow Globe:

I felt towards the end when they had the big Falstaff ending, you know, with all the kids dressed up... What were they dressed up as? Fairies. They kind of...with the whole kind of willow and kind of outdoor effect...it kind of added a bit more to it. Do you know what I mean? I mean it all kind of works in with the nature of it. I mean there were... I don’t know... they were fairies of the willow tree. I don’t know, you know, it all seemed very natural and kind of... I suppose it’s... I was going to say it’s a bit like pagan kinds of things, a bit like...pagan. And a bit more connection with their surroundings and things, you know, especially as you have Falstaff as the deer and the stag, you know. And you had all the kids out and all the masks and everything and the music worked really well too because they started playing some very eerie music and different sounds. (22 June 2014)

Particularising the fairies ‘of the willow tree’ and going on to describe Shakespeare and nature together as ‘pagan’, Richard hinted at an experience where the performance in the place generated an affect arising from but also in excess of the suitability of the play’s content in the willow theatre. Jane also reflected on a thematic complementarity between the Windsor forest scene and the Willow Globe, saying, ‘It’s a very natural environment. It’s very beautiful,

very simple, very magical. So the last scene with the deer and the fairies, you know, we know what it was all about. It adds to the atmosphere' (22 June 2014), but she went on to explain that beyond this obvious suitability, she perceived no particular aesthetic relationship between the play's content and the theatre space:

I mean apart from the last scene, as you say, I'm not sure there is a particular affinity between this particular play and this environment. I mean this environment is a beautiful place to see Shakespeare but I think this particular play... I mean, *As You Like It* felt very much in the green wood and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I've also seen here. But *Merry Wives* not so much. (22 June 2014)

While the performance of *Merry Wives* at the Willow Globe did little to encourage an ecocritical reading of the play, then, audience members articulated an experience of the place that was always still in excess of the performance of the play.

Conclusion

Minack and the Willow Globe were both created under charismatic leadership, in different time periods, under different ecological circumstances and with different ecological sensitivities. Both were initially built to facilitate local performances of Shakespeare outdoors but have subsequently expanded to become thriving venues for wider forms of performance. The theatres may be socially constructed places, but more than cultural forces influenced the way audience members spoke about place for the duration of their brief pauses there. Audience members continually suggested that their responses to the performances were 'infected and inflected' (Escolme 2012: 505) by the 'materials' and 'materialities' (Ingold 2011: 32) of the theatres, which exceeded the experience of the plays and encompassed the places of performance more broadly. This sense of place incorporated Susan Bennett's 'outer frame' or 'cultural background, audience and production horizons of expectations, social occasion' (1997: 145) but also went much further to include responses influenced by both the materials and materiality of the wider place of performance. The performances did not have to address the theatre spaces in ways that were more than referential, for the spaces to affect their responses: audience members appeared simultaneously capable of taking in the play and mostly happy for the performance not to directly address the place so long as it was happening *in* the place. While the performances might not have been conceived ecodramaturgically, they operated within a wider context for place that can be understood along ecodramaturgical lines. As ecodramaturgy seeks, they generated insights into how certain groups of people speak about what it feels like to be embedded, enmeshed, or entangled in and with a more-than-human world, without putting these outcomes at the 'center of [their] theatrical and thematic intent' (Arons and May 2012: 4).

But while Wallace Heim ventures ‘that performance art and theatrical works that are ‘about’ climate change may not be the most effective works at addressing climate change’ (2014: 10) it would be fair to say that outdoor Shakespeares at Minack and the Willow Globe appeared no more effective in specifically taking on the subject of climate change. The audience responses at these theatres did, however, speak to Timothy Morton’s provocation that “The time should come when we want to ask of any text “What does this say about the environment?”” (2007: 5), in the ways that they demonstrated how the material structures of the theatres (sea, stone, and willow particularly), conceived as active and agentic, and the materiality of the places (conceived in terms of tourism and nostalgia respectively) brought about multiple and multifarious embodied and imagined responses to place. Although audiences only briefly touched-down at Minack and the Willow Globe, their short-lived ‘doings’ in the theatres might then be understood as a ‘performance of place’ such as Mackey puts forward, that ‘demonstrate, inflect, respond to, interrogate or challenge the material and psychological construction of a particular locus’ (2013: 46). Audience members responded to ‘material’ and ‘psychological’ constructions of the places, feeling and imagining in conjunction with the active and lively ‘vibrant materialities’ (Bennett 2010)—the ‘materials and materialities’ (Ingold 2011: 32) of the nature theatres.

But was Shakespeare absorbed, assimilated into or had he infiltrated Cornwall and Wales? Did speaking Shakespeare in these landscapes naturalize a claim for all of Cornwall and Wales as Shakespeare’s, as Kent’s arguments might suggest, and, if so, how much did the landscapes speak back to Shakespeare? The performances at Minack and the Willow Globe did not attempt to challenge Shakespeare’s cultural authority with any kind of postcolonial Cornish/Welsh reading of the plays, nor were they received by audience members as doing so. The materials physically making up the theatres, however, and the material conditions of spectatorship and responses they produced suggested a privileging of certain moments where Shakespeare’s text referred to nature; a nature that must be considered intrinsic and specific to these rural landscapes in Cornwall and Wales. For Minack and Willow Globe audiences, Shakespeare in nature appeared to be indicative of the flows of people in and through places, of degrees of mobility and immobility, of natural, cultural, local, and global influences, even as they flowed through the spaces themselves, pausing briefly to perform place. If Shakespeare is global now, if he gets everywhere and belongs to everyone, there might simultaneously be a sense that Shakespeare at Minack and the Willow Globe performs a function of connecting global communities even as he represents the residue of colonialism or a cultural imperialist project. Responses to the places of Minack and the Willow Globe did not suggest the kind of localism Massey and others reject; a rooted

‘seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everyone shares’ (1993: 65). The written ethnography, then, in the spirit of nonrepresentational geographies of ‘what happens’ (Thrift 2008: 2), must suggest that these are multiple things happening simultaneously, tendrils curling out affectively in different directions, while maintaining the need to be attentive to the social, political, and cultural contexts of the performance events (even as agency is understood as extending beyond the human performances and perspectives to nonhuman materials and materialities in the places of the theatres). What seems unequivocal is that whether or not a performance attempted to engage with the outdoor theatres at Minack and the Willow Globe, the places themselves affected audience reception in ways that exceeded human performance, redistributing agency back to nature and the more-than-human environment.

This chapter has looked at audience responses to outdoor Shakespeares in two particular constructed spaces designated for theatre and performance. While there are differences between the reported experiences of Minack and the Willow Globe, audiences at both of these theatres remained seated in one position for a performance’s duration, watching a focussed stage area. In the next chapter, I move on to look at performances in spaces that are not set aside for performance; audiences move between locations as the practitioners go further towards attempting to ‘collaborate’ with space and to gesture towards forms of ‘site-specificity’ in their practices.

CHAPTER TWO: Taking Shakespeare for a walk in the park: forests, fairy tales, and three promenade performances

Notice that I can know that I am here without knowing where I am.

(Casey 2009: 54)

HELENA: My brother made me go and see a production of it, one of those god-awful outdoor things where you have to follow the actors around some park. It was a freezing night and I had no jacket. Shakespeare was a filthy bugger anyway. All that talk about getting the love juice in your eye. I could hardly keep a straight face.

(Leddy 2009: 39)

Shakespeare has been out for a walk in the park for a long time now, long enough to be a joke in David Leddy's *Susurrus* (2009), a site-based audio performance referencing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and created for Edinburgh's Botanic Gardens.⁴⁹ But with the exception of an article by Michael Dobson (2005), arguing that promenade Shakespeares have been popular in the U.K. since the 1970s, scholarly discussions of these purportedly notorious walks in the park with Shakespeare are scarce.⁵⁰ In Chapter One I looked at outdoor Shakespeares performed in the particular theatre spaces of the Willow Globe and Minack. I now shift the focus to performances in spaces that are neither designed nor designated for theatre; spaces that at the moment of performance might be considered Mike Pearson's 'sites'; sites where, Pearson explains, 'no [...] traditions of theatrical usage exist' but where, simultaneously, 'the traces of other usages are apparent' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 111). My examples here are taken from practitioners who stated an explicit intent to 'collaborate with space': Sprite Productions' *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2014, dir. Charlotte Bennett), Taking Flight Theatre Company's *As You Like It* (2014, dir. Elise Davison), and Teatro Vivo's *After The Tempest* (2013, dir. Sophie Austin). Surprisingly perhaps, given that these performances took place in 'found spaces'—not spaces set aside for performance like the nature-theatres of Minack and the Willow Globe—I find that, instead of paying similar

⁴⁹ Leddy's *Susurrus* (2009) tells the story of two adopted children who recall a trip to a park-based performance of *Dream*, which supposedly took place in the same park. Leddy constructs a ghost of a prior performance of *Dream*—one that never actually happened—as part of the personal memories for the fictitious characters in his play.

⁵⁰ Existing literature on promenade Shakespeares tends to mingle references to indoor and outdoor performances indiscriminately. Dobson's article, for instance refers to two indoor performances, Cardboard Citizens' *Pericles* (2003), Out of Joint's *Macbeth* (2004-2005), and Chichester Festival Theatre's production of Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* (2004), where the audience were both indoors and outdoors (2005: 20). He argues that contemporary promenade Shakespeares conflate influences from the early twentieth century historical pageants and revivals of the Medieval Mystery Plays. Purcell also refers to promenade performances in passing in *Shakespeare and Audience* (2013: 81-81, 128).

attention to the wider places as the locus of interest, audience members tended to be more invested in what Gay McAuley refers to as ‘the onstage fictional places’ (1999: 30) of the plays. I also discover, somewhat contradictorily, that the more performances were thought of as ‘collaborating with space’, the more the effect appeared to be a greater sense of audience engagement with the play. Audience members repeatedly reported feeling a ‘part’ of the performance they were attending, raising questions about who ‘collaboration’ serves and what it actually achieves in terms of audience/ space relationships.

This chapter is therefore more attentive to the stagings of the plays than the previous one, although, as before, the argument is constructed around a discussion of themes identified in the audience ethnography. The three productions I am looking at were variously referred to as ‘site-specific’, ‘immersive’, and ‘promenade’ in their promotional and supporting literature. The audiences made different kinds of tracks through the performances, walking for parts, interacting with parts, and sitting (on picnic blankets, folding chairs, plastic bags, grass, gravel, and rocks) to watch set scenes. To begin, I briefly discuss these performance forms to locate the case studies and their practices. This means that some of the argument around being outdoors is bracketed temporarily and I return to it more explicitly in Chapters Three and Four. Excepting Sprite’s *Dream* at the privately-owned Ripley Castle, North Yorkshire, these performances all took place in public parks; the kinds of parks Dan Kulmala classifies as ‘urban pastoral: a civic green world of social distinction like an old city park that belongs (or belonged) to an upper middle class or elite neighborhood’ (2015:4). I go on to look at the kinds of responses that were produced by taking the audiences on a walk through the parks; in all cases ‘into the woods’ (although some of these ‘woods’ were actually found in small clusters of trees). While *Dream* and *As You Like It* are already set in the ‘woods outside Athens’ and ‘Forest of Arden’, Teatro Vivo’s adaptation of *The Tempest* also brought its audiences under trees to explore the play’s island location.⁵¹ In different ways, each of these productions played with poet Jeremy Hooker’s notion of ‘ditch vision’, summarized by Richard Kerridge as ‘the imaginative habit of playing with scale in order to discover wildness and infinity in small spaces; the genre of daydreaming that sees in an overgrown railway bank the principle and possibility of wildness’ (2009: 133). The performances asked their audiences to look into the cracks, find wildness in spaces where nature burst and tangled through landscaping, and affirmed Rebecca Solnit’s

⁵¹ In Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* Ferdinand hauls logs and Caliban gets firewood for Prospero. Gabriel Egan proposes that Shakespeare is alluding to mass deforestation around the time of writing *The Tempest* (2006: 155-157).

provocation that ‘The surprises, liberations, and clarifications of travel can sometimes be garnered by going around the block as well as going around the world’ (2001: 6).

If, as Catherine Belsey has convincingly put forward, some of Shakespeare’s perceived timelessness is derived from the plays’ fairy tale/ fireside story source material garnered from the oral tradition (2007: 11-20), then taking the audiences for walks in the park relocated Shakespeare to the ubiquitous woodlands of such fairy stories. Belsey argues that Shakespeare reworked the fairy stories and folk tales from the oral tradition among his other sources, so that even when we encounter the plays today, somewhere, some of the stories are already lodged in our consciousness. The plots and ideas are vaguely recognisable, which gives audiences a way in to the material (11-20). At a time when nostalgia abounds for a Britain once covered in forests, Sara Maitland argues for greater emphasis on *where* fairy stories are set—for the site-specificity of northern European fairy tales as they evolved in British contexts—reclaiming the ‘real’ forests from psychoanalytic readings where they stand in for some kind of narrative of the unconscious (2012: 7). Maitland explains, ‘I want to match up what is in the forests with fairy stories, see how the themes of the fairy stories grow out of the reality of the forest, and the other way around too—show how people see the forests in a particular way because of the fairy stories’ (20). Salmon Rushdie’s introduction to Angela Carter’s collection of fairy tales, *Burning your Boats* (1995), draws attention to Carter’s distinction between the damp, homey English ‘wood’ of *Dream* and the terrifying ‘forests’ of Northern European fairy tales (xiii). Accordingly, in his popular non-fiction *Wildwood: A journey through trees* (2007), Roger Deakin argues that the transformative settings of Shakespeare’s Arden and Athens are examples of such an ‘English wood’ (x), harkening back to British folkloric traditions. For Deakin, ‘It is no accident that in the comedies of Shakespeare, people go into the greenwood to grow, learn and change’ (x). My suggestion is that such ideas around Shakespeare, fairy tales, forests, and woodlands might extend to considerations of performance too. While audience members spoke about the actual trees in the parks—responding to the ‘vibrant matter’ (Bennett 2010) of which they were composed—they also suggested that they imagined the trees to be standing in for generic and unplaced fairy tale woodlands. As I elaborate over the next sections, there was evidence of a ‘metaphorical’ (Rebellato 2009) substitution of one forest for another forest, which had implications for what was going on in terms of an ‘ecomimetic’ (Morton 2007) relationship between performance and environment.⁵²

⁵² Teatro Vivo followed *After The Tempest*, not with another Shakespeare, but with an adaptation of *Grimm’s Fairy Tales* (2014). Alongside a growing repertoire of children’s stories presented outdoors, Stephen Sondheim’s musical *Into the Woods*—which brings together multiple fairy tale narratives—is

Site-specific, Immersive, or Promenade

In the Introduction I pointed to examples of frustration with the term ‘site-specific’ being misused to describe outdoor Shakespeares. There was concern around the term being employed as a gimmick: diluted and debased. Worse, perhaps, was the potential that misuse might obscure the most potent site-specific work within a heap of mediocrity and misunderstanding. Phil Smith’s suggestion that ‘site-specific’ has in fact been ‘purloined’ by Shakespeare-in-the-park indicates injury at the hands of a malign and regressive force (2010: 113). Also apparently aggrieved, Bertie Ferdman alludes to theft, lamenting that ‘the term has become confusing and vast, robbing ‘site-specific theatre’ of its potential virtuosity and of its specificity’ (2013: 5). But broad descriptions of site-specificity can be so all-encompassing that it is sometimes difficult to argue that *any* theatre outside of the auditorium is *not* site-specific (and even some theatre in auditoria too). Joanne Tompkins, for instance, notices that site-specific is ‘increasingly ascribed simply to a production that takes place outside a conventional theatre venue’, maintaining that the term should be thought of as ‘contingent’, to accommodate the expansive range of performances presenting under this heading (2012: 3). Tompkins contends that ‘the host/ ghost relationship, audience interactivity, and the significance of affect’ (7) are important in site-specific performance, which can also bring about a ‘heightened experience of feeling’ (11). Moreover, she summarises that a ‘basic aim in site-specific work is to encourage audiences to see and experience more of their surrounding differently’ (11). These effects hardly seem unique to site-specific practices, though, and—especially when coupled with such disapproval as noted above—it is hard not to feel just a little sympathetic towards those practitioners ‘malignly’ (or naively) terming their work ‘site-specific’ in a bid to describe how it differs from other forms of outdoor Shakespeares.

Following calls for site-specific practitioners to ‘be more specific’ (Field 2008), Guardian theatre critic Lyn Gardner declares frustration at the seeming proliferation of ‘immersive’ too (2014a). Evidently edgier than site-specific performance, the language of immersive theatre has begun to seep into outdoor Shakespeares, doubtless influenced by the work of companies such as Punchdrunk, dreamthinkspeak, and Sound and Fury, all of whom have reworked canonical texts including Shakespeare’s for their immersive performances (Purcell 2013: 128-139). Although Gardner does not cite outdoor Shakespeares as culprits, the performances I am looking at in this chapter are potentially culpable of what she charges.

now regularly performed by outdoor Shakespeare companies (Regent’s Park Open Air Theatre in 2013 and Ashland Shakespeare Festival, Oregon in 2014). Shakespeare’s Globe’s *Read Not Dead* programme presented George Peele’s *The Old Wives Tale* at Wilderness Festival in 2014.

But emergent discussions around what actually constitutes immersive performance are often so expansive as to be vague too. Gareth White refers to immersive performances that ‘use installations and expansive environments, which have mobile audiences, and which invite audience participation’ (2012: 221). The performances in this chapter match such a description, certainly in terms of environment, audience mobility, and participation, as I go on to show. Josephine Machon writes that ‘with immersive practice the audience is thrown (sometimes even literally) into a totally new environment and context from the everyday world from which it has come’ (2013: 27).⁵³ Again—minus the throwing—the audiences I am looking at certainly found themselves exploring entirely new environments and contexts from the everyday. As with Tompkins’s use of ‘site-specific’, then, it is relatively easy to see how practitioners staging outdoor Shakespeares in configurations other than ‘end-on’ might feel their work achieves some of the aspirations of immersive performance too.

What is at stake with immersive theatre is twofold, Purcell argues, and relates both to a perceived ‘emancipation’ of the spectator, after Jacques Rancière’s now well-known challenge to the idea of spectatorship as inherently ‘passive’ (2009), as well as to the experiential effects of such performance (Purcell 2013: 134, 139). Robert Shaughnessy also, more tenuously, refers to ideas around Shakespeare and immersive performance, describing ‘forms of contemporary environmental, site-specific and immersive theatre that have, knowingly or not, placed Rancière’s ‘emancipated’ spectator at the heart of their transactions’ (2012 n.p.). Purcell doubts that immersive theatre automatically fosters an emancipated audience member, but cautions that this need not negate the embodied and visceral effects such performances can have on their audiences (2013: 139). He also makes a helpful—if not universally applicable—distinction between immersive and promenade theatre, suggesting that immersive productions ‘typically allow their audiences to move around the performance site at their own pace, and often to interact with its contents’ (129) whereas at promenade performances ‘spectators follow a set path around a series of locations’ (128).

In which case, perhaps it would be best to steer clear of the terms ‘site-specific’ or ‘immersive’ altogether and to revert to ‘promenade’? But the French ‘promenade’ sounds affected, dated, and as *passé* as ‘open-air’. It recalls bourgeois seashores and the kind of ‘cosy

⁵³ Machon’s ‘scale of immersivity’ (2013) includes such descriptors of immersive performance as, ‘in-its-own-world’ and ‘space’ (93), ‘scenography’ (94), ‘sound’ (95), ‘duration/al’ (96), ‘interdisciplinary/hybridised practice’ (97), ‘bodies’ and ‘audience’ (98), ‘a ‘contract for participation’ (99), ‘intention’ and ‘expertise’ (100). As with much performance retrospectively deemed to be site-specific, there seems to be a retrospective application of immersive to work such as that by Wildworks and Louise-Ann Wilson in the second part of her book.

and self-congratulatory' experience that Dobson finds anything but liberating (2005: 21).⁵⁴

Dobson argues that:

the experience of attending a promenade Shakespeare today is characteristically not one of emancipation [...] but one of subjection, made explicit by figures around the fringe of the play who serve as authoritarian mediators between the play's world and that of its helpless spectators. (2005: 24)

He goes on to claim that promenade Shakespeares simply replace rows of restrictive theatre seats with 'a more elaborate and better-agreed set of restrictions' (26). Indeed, it is worth noting that Dobson's feeling of subjection echoes some of the criticisms around agency and participation that have been levelled at immersive performance more recently. Multiple studies and summaries consider the politics and aesthetics of what it means to 'participate' in performance, what it means for an audience member to be 'active', and what makes them 'passive', who has the power, who has agency, and what modes of interaction are preferred, superior, or politically emancipatory (Bishop 2012; Freshwater 2011; Purcell 2013: 134; Nield 2008; White 2013; Reason 2015: 272-275). But care is needed not to undermine audiences' abilities to make judgements for themselves, ironically blocking the agency that immersive forms of performance seem so anxious to promote: we want you to be emancipated (really, we do), but only on our terms and when attending the kinds of performance that we think are good for you. It is not my intention here to ask whether or how the audience members to whom I spoke supported or contended these positions. What I am interested in is in how they conceived of themselves as 'participating' in the performances and how they defined their own participation. The park spaces generated responses that referred explicitly to 'participation', stressing the importance of allowing audience members to identify for themselves what it meant to 'participate' in the imaginary world of the performance, rather than imposing pre-existing ideas about audience participation onto the responses.

If terms were 'purloined' by the companies I am looking at, I suggest that any seemingly sloppy use of language reflected the nod towards site-specific or immersive practices that a company was making and to describe an experience that was profoundly different to being at an indoor performance. The audience responses pointed towards a more complex engagement with the theatrical events anyway, derived both from moving through the park spaces and from the experience of being outdoors. Given the increasingly 'contingent' uses of the terms 'site-specific' and 'immersive', it would not be impossible—

⁵⁴ Rosemary Gaby notices that the novelty of promenade Shakespeares outdoors has 'worn off' in Australia and that increased safety regulations present challenges for companies wishing to move their audiences (2014: 92).

just unproductive—to argue that the performances in this chapter do, in many ways, evince many of the effects claimed for either form. Far from wishing to negate the need to differentiate between practices, my argument is that attending more closely to audience responses and allowing more for the agency of nonhuman matter challenges how these differences are articulated and understood.

To outline a tighter working definition of site-specificity, then, I return to Fiona Wilkie and Mike Pearson. Wilkie argues that ‘Simply put, site-specific theatre *privileges place*’ (2008: 89 [emphasis added]). She elaborates:

It suggests that the act of dividing the activity labelled 'theatre' from the building labelled 'theatre' holds possibilities for responding to and interrogating a range of current spatial concerns, and for investigating the spatial dimension of contemporary identities (personal, communal, national and international). (2008: 89)

In this understanding of the form, place is at the heart of site-specific performance. For Pearson, site-specific works ‘are inseparable from their sites, the only contexts in which they are intelligible’ (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 23) and he later proposes that ‘a measure of specificity may be whether the authors of its written account are willing or able to devote equal attention to performance *and* to site’ (2010: 194 [original emphasis]). Drawing from Wilkie and Pearson, Bridget Escolme suggests that at site-specific performance ‘the material presence and the historically accrued meanings of the performance space make meaning of and intrude upon the text’ (2012: 510). The three productions in this chapter would have been intelligible at other outdoor sites—in fact, Teatro Vivo and Taking Flight’s work toured to multiple parks—and they are therefore incompatible with Pearson’s definition (2001: 23). Some of the performances might be described as ‘site-generic’, meaning ‘performance generated for a series of like-sites’ (Wrights & Sites 2001: n.p.), but ‘generic’ does not feature anywhere in descriptions of the practices, and audience responses to nonhuman matter cast doubt on whether any kind of performance will be received as site-generic, irrespective of what the performance is doing in space.⁵⁵

Also, despite the practitioners’ efforts to ‘collaborate’ with space, the performances did not ‘privilege place’ (Wilkie 2008: 89) by putting place ahead of Shakespeare. In their post-performance accounts, audience members spoke a lot about place, but they tended to

⁵⁵ There are further various attempts to nuance the use of the term ‘site-specific’ in relation to contemporary performance. Hodge’s continuum also includes ‘site-sympathetic’ as well as ‘site-generic’ and ‘site-specific’ (Wrights & Sites 2001: n.p.). Hodge and Turner use ‘site-responsive’ (2012:111). Michael McKinnie later introduces the idea of ‘site-monopolistic’ (in Birch and Tompkins 2012:21-36). Pearson points out that ‘site-based’, McAuley’s preferred term, becomes a catch-all term for all forms of performance outside the auditorium (2010: 9-10).

be speaking about the places in the performances rather than the places themselves. The result is that while the audience responses trouble generalist claims for the effects of site-specific and immersive performances, they stop short of arriving at the kind of rigorous understanding of site-specificity that Wilkie and Pearson propose. It is at this juncture that some of the problems arising from the productions I am looking at—related to ahistorical readings of Shakespeare and a writing over of place—are best articulated. While immersive performance is not the focus of this chapter, questions regarding agency and participation arise within the audience feedback and overlap with the concerns around place. The slippages between both are therefore key to the argument.

What follow are three ethnographic accounts of audience responses to performances by professional theatre companies Sprite Productions, Taking Flight, and Teatro Vivo. With the audiences, I walk into the woods, venture on often-beaten tracks, wander off the path, follow others' desire-lines, and find occasional bits of wildness in cultured parks.

Sprite Productions' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



Fig. 2.1. Titania's bower, Sprite Productions *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Ripley Castle (2014)

Hester and Liam Evans-Ford at Sprite Productions have presented what they refer to as 'site-specific' and 'promenade' Shakespeare at Ripley Castle, North Yorkshire every year since 2004 (Sprite 2014). A tenth anniversary production of *Dream* in July 2014 marked their final performance before a break to 'reconsider the company's direction' (Evans-Ford 2014: 3). Among audiences, there was a sense of pride at having Shakespeare and Sprite in this part of Yorkshire and a palpable sense of loss that they would be absent the following year. The performance, which followed the linear narrative of Shakespeare's play, began in an

Edwardian walled garden with Vivaldi soothing over a speaker system. Audiences followed the actors, in Victorian costumes, through a tropical greenhouse (a threshold between the ‘cultured’ garden and the ‘wilder’ grounds beyond) and into the woods. In the woods, Shakespeare’s lovers kept to the marked paths and the fairies were further in, off the official pathways. Hidden in a clearing, Titania’s bower nestled in a tree decorated with found objects, ribbons, streamers, and hanging mobiles. Samba drums accompanied the transitions between scenes; each scene commencing only when all audience members, most of whom travelled with picnic chairs, had set up camp. Some of the largest audiences I encountered for this kind of performance, up to 150 people, were encouraged to ‘pack in tight like penguins’ as they assembled at each new location.⁵⁶

Postcards from the field

Woods wilder than walled garden’s herbaceous borders BUT prize specimens still labelled/ signposted. Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) Planted 1860s – with seeds from Canada.

(Field notes 4 July 2014)

As a result of walking between the scenes, audience members often indicated a more continuous imaginative engagement with the place of performance than they did at Minack and the Willow Globe. One of the themes that emerged from the feedback was a sense that the woodland scenes felt ‘real’; generating complementarity rather than rupture, harmony rather than conflict, in the performance’s aesthetic relationship to space. Charlotte responded, ‘Well, I mean, much of the play is set in a wood so to perform in a wood you can’t get much better than that. Even though it’s drama, you can’t get more real than that’ (6 July 2014). She conversed with her partner William, expanding on the delight they felt seeing things in their ‘natural’ places:

Charlotte: The fairy queen when she was in the woods and the lovers were playing in front of her and she was asleep.

William: When they were lost in the woods as well. That was excellent.

Charlotte: Because they were! They weren’t on a stage – they were lost in the woods! And the fairies were in the woods. (6 July 2014)

⁵⁶ I attended Sprite’s *Dream* in July 2014, the same weekend that Le Grand Depart for the Tour De France passed through Ripley. The huge crowds lining the streets for the cycling event were a reminder of the relative popularity of outdoor Shakespeares.

Carmel echoed Charlotte and William's remarks when she said, 'I thought that it was a really vivid way that a fairy queen would have a bed in a wood and so the way they worked so well and the fact that the audience fit in it as well as the actors, that was amazing' (6 July 2014). James, another audience member, explained, 'It makes it more believable in a way because the surroundings are a natural theatre and especially this one because they're in the wood. It really lends itself, I thought' (6 July 2014). Recurring throughout these comments was the idea that being in the woods made the performance more 'believable', more 'realistic', and the perceived scenic complementarity was bound up with representations of nature.

Alex and Joey felt that the performance in the woods was 'natural', discussing, 'I thought the kind of trees and the kind of set scenes were great. Well, you could do it on a stage but it's contrived on a stage. Here it is natural. It's there, isn't it? / You're part of the stage' (6 July 2014). Liam also responded to the woodland environment, deeming the setting not only effective but the 'natural' place for the events of *Dream*:

I think the environment was terrific. The forest, the bowers, the trees, the artificial lights on it as the evening went on. The fairy lights, I thought, looked very well and really brought up the environment and the twisted trees and gnarled knots of the trees were, yeah, that was very effective. So if the actors or the lovers were in the forest having a quarrel and you had fairies, they were where you would expect to find them. It was actually the naturalness of that. They used the setting well and I didn't feel there was an artifice. (5 July 2014)

For Liam, the woods were the organic place for Shakespeare's fairies. His response was also cursorily attentive to the 'materials' (Ingold 2011: 32) making up the forest—'gnarled knots' and 'twisted trees'—recalling Jane Bennett's 'thing-power' (2010) discussed in Chapter One; although here there was a greater sense of the things being subsumed into the performance, being encouraged to stand in for Shakespeare's things. Asked what Shakespeare contributed to the event, Liam responded, 'Well the story was being told in the forest and it's a fairy tale sort of a story. Apart from knowing Shakespeare very well, nothing particularly. It was just the novelty of being in the forest as the story was being told. That's what came across most strongly' (5 July 2014). The natural place for Shakespeare's play was not any kind of Elizabethan stage, it seemed, but the kinds of woods where the events of the play might actually have unfolded; notwithstanding differences between 'real' Athenian woods, the Athenian woods of Shakespeare's early modern imagination, and the imported eighteenth century woods on the grounds of the fourteenth century Ripley Castle.

Taken thematically, the above responses point to pleasure derived from an ahistorical fairy-tale experience of *Dream* rather than an Elizabethan one. This experience resonates oddly with traditions of theatrical realism—'realism' understood here as 'a broad spectrum

of representational strategies intended to produce an effect of verisimilitude on stage and page' (Barker, Mazer and Solga 2013: 573)—despite individuals' insurances on the woods making Sprite's a 'natural' performance, away from the 'contrived' theatre space. For Elin Diamond, 'Because it naturalizes the relation between character and actor, setting and world, realism operates in concert with ideology' (1997: 4), reinforcing the status quo and limiting scope for rupture or dissidence. Dan Rebellato's argument for thinking about '[t]heatrical representation as metaphorical'—by which he means that 'We know the two objects are quite separate, but we think of one in terms of the other' (2009: 25)—is perhaps a more useful way of understanding these responses, however. As Rebellato argues, '[i]n illusions we have *mistaken beliefs* about what we are seeing. No sane person watching a play believes that what is being represented before them is actually happening' (24 [original emphasis]). The audience members at Sprite's *Dream* did not appear to be taken in by the setting at Ripley. Nobody appeared to believe that they were actually, physically transported to the 'woods outside Athens' during the performance—despite the closeness of the metaphor to metonymy (the trees at Ripley stood in for Shakespeare's trees)—but audience members did suggest that they accepted the invitation to think about one tree in terms of another woodland. The suggestions that *Dream* felt 'real' in the woods at Ripley Castle—that the play was naturalized in the woodland setting—do present problems nonetheless in terms of representations of nature and a writing over of space and time that need to be acknowledged. Cathy Turner points out that 'space is often envisaged as an aggregation of layered writings – a palimpsest' (2004: 373), but the responses to Sprite's *Dream* indicated limited awareness of any layering, suggesting that the performance largely succeeded in writing over the woods with the Shakespeare.

Maitland is struck by the simultaneity of 'the nineteenth century Romantic aesthetic in gardening, which led to the development of ornamental forests and woods' (2012: 279) in Britain and Germany, coinciding with 'the re-emergence of fairy stories' (279) in the wake of the publication of the Grimm brothers' collection in 1812. Her argument is that both the ornamental woods and the collection of fairy tales arose from 'the same cultural movement and influenced each other profoundly' (279). It might follow that audience responses to Sprite's *Dream* produced a contemporary extension of Maitland's ideas by transforming Ripley's planted woodlands to fairy tale woods for Shakespeare's play. Ripley's 'real' woods were supplanted by Shakespeare's Athenian woods, Shakespeare's early modern woods supplanted by imagined fairy tale woods, and the performance itself enacted within living twenty-first century woods, themselves planted at a time when the re-emergence of fairy tales in popular consciousness influenced landscape gardening. It is such an ahistorical and

nostalgic reading of Shakespeare's woods, indeed, that Susan Bennett takes from Angela Carter to provide the epigraph to *Performing Nostalgia* (1996):

This is the true Shakespearian wood - but it is not the wood of Shakespeare's time, which did not know itself to be Shakespearian, and therefore felt no need to keep up appearances. No. The wood we have just described is that of nineteenth-century nostalgia, which disinfected the wood, cleansing it of the grave, hideous and elemental beings with which the superstition of an earlier age had filled it. (Carter in Bennett 1996: 1)

In stating that *Dream* felt real in the woods at Ripley, audience responses to Shakespeare elided the cultural and political construction of the castle—whose grounds and greenhouses would likely have benefitted from British colonialism abroad—and instead reimagined Shakespeare as a universal fairy story. While much in the audience responses concerned the place of performance, as Pearson's definition of site-specificity seeks (2010: 194), responses were largely focussed on the places in the play, which eclipsed and erased the wider place, precluding potential for engaging with whatever 'spatial dimension of contemporary identities' (Wilkie 2008: 89) may have lurked in Ripley's plantation woods.

It was in the spirit of Rebellato's metaphor that comments around the performance feeling 'real' extended into discussion around feeling like a 'participant' in the performance—another of the themes I identified in responses to Sprite's *Dream* (and also in responses to Taking Flight and Teatro Vivo's work, discussed later in the chapter). The physical act of walking through the woods elicited audience responses delighting in the 'sense of place that can only be gained on foot' (Solnit 2001: 9), extending the fairy tale theme into a sense of shared participation in an adventure in the woods. Adam, for instance, explained, 'You feel more a part of it. Yeah, you do feel a part of it' (5 July 2014) and Joey said, 'You know, we weren't just watching it, we were spectators at the wedding here where we just ended, you know, so it integrates you' (6 July 2014). Rachel reflected on the pathways through the woods, saying:

There were pathways, some of them were like natural pathways, well, not natural, but cleared pathways and some of them were more like proper pathways and so it felt like there was a path to the next scene, not just in time but also in space so that was really nice. (6 July 2014)

She continued, stating that she felt as though she was transitioning from observer to participant as she walked along the paths, noting the props that had been laid out carefully along the trails:

It made it an exciting adventure and the use of the rocking reindeer and the use of the bath, you know, the fairies were much more like fairies, and, yeah. So it started

off feeling quite kind of, British, I should be doing this properly and it felt like we had become adventurers around a story. (6 July 2014)

Further audience members also indicated a kind of participation in the event that was not entirely linked to the play. Rose and Ashley spoke to one another:

Rose: And it makes you feel like you are part of it because, like, yesterday's performance it was different people so you know, I don't know how to say it, part of you is involved in the play.

Ashley: You're almost welcomed into it because you're walking through with them. Not that we were taking any great part in it but you're certainly made to feel...

Rose: Hey...my handbag was stolen by Puck. (6 July 2014)

No one appeared to believe that they were really 'participating' in the events of *Dream* but they accepted the invitation to participate in the performance event. They appeared to choose to participate in the adventure the same way that they opted into the woods as a metaphor for another woodland, choosing to opt in, rather more than duped by mimetic verisimilitude. They never appeared to lose the sense of being an audience member at a performance.

Also, despite instructions about where and when to move, people repeatedly reported feeling 'free' at Sprite's *Dream*, another of the themes running through the feedback in all three of this chapter's productions. Freedom tended to come juxtaposed with the constraints of an imaginary theatre seat (and the cultural elitism associated with a theatre seat). The choice of where to sit or stand, proximity to the actors, and the possibility of stretching one's legs facilitated this sense of unrestraint, which ran parallel to the idea of participating in the performance. Although he earlier suggested that he felt 'part of' the performance, for instance, Adam described the physical experience of being an audience member at *Dream* with some sense of separation:

It was sometimes chilly, sometimes wet. No, no, you're not confined as you are in a theatre. I mean a few theatres are comfortable but many of them, you don't have much in the old ones, you don't have much knee room, you're jammed up against people. You know, so from that point, from an audience point of view it can be more comfortable depending on the weather. (5 July 2014)

He had no control over what happened within the scripted play, but Adam was grateful for the opportunity to move as he wished during the performance; there was some sense of empowerment in the choice to move at will.

Not everyone, however, enjoyed how the journey was mapped out so prescriptively. Despite having earlier described the woods at Ripley as 'the natural place for the play', Liam never ceased to be aware of how the metaphor was being continually, artificially

reconstructed: Ripley's woods were reimagined as Shakespeare's woods, Shakespeare's woods were reimagined as a fairy tale. He explained:

Some things I found very difficult to get around. Here I was standing and we were being told to sit or to lie on a mat and this was happening every scene that you moved to, so you were breaking the atmosphere of it I felt, by the management telling you what you should do. (5 July 2014)

Liam disliked the instructions to move, recalling Dobson's 'helpless spectator' (2005: 24), who had merely swapped the restrictions of a theatre seat for another set of terms and conditions.

Ecologically too, there are implications for the representations of nature in Sprite's *Dream*. David Abram observes that 'Walking through the forest, we often fail to register the vocal sounds of other animals, the whistles of squirrels and the intermittent calls of various birds, because although our bodies are in the forest, our verbal thoughts are commonly elsewhere' (2010: 191). He recalls Henry David Thoreau's self-criticism, 'What business have I in the woods if I am thinking of something out of the woods?' (192). In the case of Sprite's performance—and, in many respects, at all of the performances I am looking at—one might adapt the question to ask 'What business have I in the woods if I am thinking of some other woods?' Despite apparently opting into metaphorical theatrical representation, audience responses simultaneously suggested Morton's concept of 'ecomimesis' (2007: 8), which refers to those damaging representational strategies in literature, art, and culture, originating in British Romanticism and aspiring to provide access to 'real' nature by faithfully rendering nature within an art object. Ecomimesis, Morton argues, succeeds only in aestheticizing 'Nature' and keeping it at a distance (31). In thinking about a few trees as a wood, this 'real' Nature accessed through the lens of a Shakespearean fairy story, nature was aestheticized, kept 'over there', and substituted for Nature.

Chapter Three comes back to the affective capacities of the outdoor environment and Chapter Four discusses how audience members utilized the language of theatrical scenographic representation to describe the landscapes they walked and weathered, but for now I just wish to reiterate that irrespective of how the woods were framed as fairy tales or stripped of history, they were still experienced as active, lively, and affective. However much the cultural and social histories of the woods were written over with Shakespeare, they were still perceived as supportive of, but not entirely equal to, the performance. 'In an open world', Tim Ingold writes, 'the creeping entanglements of life will always and inevitably triumph over our attempts to box them in' (2011: 125) and there remained a liveliness to the woods at Ripley that was always entirely present in its own right, however much it was appropriated

by practitioners and re-imagined by audiences. Audience members responded to the production's formal gesture towards site-specificity, noting the attempt to integrate the 'materials' (Ingold 2011: 32) already 'at site' with what was 'brought to site' (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 211) in ways that acknowledged some of the lively and affective capacities of the woods themselves. Klara, for instance, transitioned from thinking about the material props that transformed Ripley's woods into a theatrical setting, to a reflection that the human life in the woods was not prior to the trees being alive in their own right. She explained, 'And the attention to detail. It was almost like a festival-like feeling with streamers coming from the trees and there was a little Christmas tree as well. And a rocking horse. Just lots of little details. It looked like the forest was really alive. Which of course it is' (6 July 2014). Lyra noted the dust moving in the wind in the woods, transitioning to the dust from thoughts of proximity to the actors, 'And the fact that they were all around. It was not quite interactive, but the elements were interactive with us. I mean, you could see the dust flying' (6 July 2014). Lyra's suggestion was that she felt that she was interacting with the dust and the wind in the woods more than with the performance particularly.

Sprite's *Dream*, then, brought its audiences into the woods, writing over stories of Ripley with Shakespeare's story, itself transformed into an ahistorical fairy tale, and not unproblematically using the space as a container for their work. The performance of set scenes in the woods generated greater engagement with the story of the play, fostering feelings of participation in the performance that suggested a metaphorical relationship between play and place (Rebellato 2009). But by accepting one nature as a metaphor for another, audience members also demonstrated the kind of ecomimetic aestheticizing that Morton argues must be the outcome of every attempt at faithful, objective representations of nature (Morton 2007).



Figure 2.2. Rocking Reindeer, Sprite Productions' *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2014)

Responses to Taking Flight's *As You Like It*, which I look at next, share much with the audience responses to Sprite's work. I found that the parks in which Taking Flight performed were also written over with Shakespeare's plays. Differences between the company's practices, however, generated further themes that help to illustrate what was unique to each company's work, subsequently illuminating those aspects of the responses that were attributable to the performances and those which were the product of the places themselves.

Taking Flight's *As You Like It*



Figure 2.3. Alison Halstead as Rosalind and Connor Allen as Orlando in *Taking Flight's As You Like It*. Jorge Lizalde Cano (2014)

The second case study in this chapter is Taking Flight Theatre Company's *As You Like It*, described as both 'promenade' and 'immersive' in its supporting literature. Director Elise Davison explained Taking Flight's approach to space, saying: 'We are more responsive to the places we perform in so they are not just a backdrop to our work. [...] We encourage audiences to look in all the nooks and crannies' (Wales Online 2013). Taking Flight works with 'groups of people who have traditionally been under-represented in theatre' (Taking Flight 2014), creating inclusive performances and challenging perceptions of (dis)ability. This two-hour production *toured* to parks and green spaces in Wales and the South West of England featuring a multi-racial cast of differently-abled actors. Live audio-description was available for audience members via radio-mic and sign-language was incorporated into all aspects of the performance. All of the trails through the parks were wheelchair accessible and volunteer 'flight assistants' helped those who needed assistance to move between scenes. The performance began in an interactive fairground set-up where audience members had their fortunes told, competed in a duck race, threw balls at a coconut shy, and arm-wrestled Charles the Wrestler. The fair transitioned into a song performed by local outreach groups before audiences followed the actors on a journey around the parks, into Arden. Like Sprite's *Dream*, Taking Flight's work looked like a fairy tale in the woods.⁵⁷ Michael Dobson argues

⁵⁷ There is further precedent for this fairy tale reading of the play and the subsequent link to the woods in Belsey's mapping *As You Like It's* Orlando storyline onto stories of youngest brothers such

that ‘everywhere one looks under the surface of English outdoor Shakespeare one finds the desire to sit in an English field and say, ‘This *is* Arden’ (2011: 188 [original emphasis]) and audience members at Taking Flight’s *As You Like It* certainly indicated that the performance facilitated an imaginative response to Arden rather than uncovering, responding to, or revealing any of the park’s own stories.

Given that Taking Flight’s *As You Like It* toured to multiple parks, the production came closer to fitting Stephen Hodge’s categorization of ‘site-generic’ work (Wrights & Sites 2001: n.p.) than Sprite’s *Dream* did. I attended performances at Cyfartha Castle, Merthyr Tydfil, Thompson’s Park, Cardiff, and Blaise Castle, Bristol. At Cyfarthfa Castle—a nineteenth century castle witness to industrial success, decline and depression—audiences gathered at the bandstand where trees and grassy hills blocked out traces of Merthyr below; at Thompson’s Park—planted during the late eighteenth century in residential Canton, now a short walk from the buzzy Chapter Arts Centre—audiences gathered around a decorative water fountain, whose statue by Welsh artist William Goscombe John has been stolen and replaced many times; and, lastly, on the grounds of the eighteenth century Blaise Castle dairy estate audiences gathered in a sunken amphitheatre, waiting for disgruntled explorers to return from faraway pub toilets (rangers closed Blaise’s public amenities at 5pm sharp: no concessions for Shakespeare here). There was nothing generic about the parks, which provided varied environments, contexts, and theatre audiences. In the next section of ethnography, however, I move freely between responses given at all three parks, as what was unique to Taking Flight’s work—arising from the alignment of the company’s formal approach to space with its mission of inclusivity—was identifiable in the feedback at all of the performances: the product of the ‘site-generic’ aspect of the practice.

Initially, thematically, audience responses to *As You Like It* shared much with those already discussed at Sprite’s *Dream*. At each of the parks, a few trees stood in for larger woodlands, substituting the ‘real’ trees of the parks for Shakespeare’s imagined English woodlands. Audience members set off on a journey, exploring Arden together. At Thompson’s Park, Tracy described delight at being in the woods, thinking about how well the place suited the play. Like others at Ripley, she suggested that the interactive exposition scenes and the shared journey through the park facilitated a form of participation in the performance:

I loved the beginning with all the fairground games. It kind of brought the audience together. And then all of a sudden we were taken into the story. I suppose the idea

as those found in ‘The Golden Goose’ and ‘Silly Jack’ and stories of ‘exiled princesses’ in the case of *Rosalind* (2007: 22).

of it being *As You Like It*, part of it is set in the Forest of Arden, which is very rural, and I suppose all the trees and the greenery helped me to imagine what the Forest of Arden might have been like and how the actors used the trees as well, you know, to stick love notes on, so, yeah, I feel like that added a lot to the story. (18 June 2014)

At Cyfarthfa Castle, Cheryl echoed Tracy's sentiments about heading into the woods. She said, 'Oh yeah, well it [the environment] had to be very much a part of it because the little area and the trees where it was quite densely wooded, I mean, you really felt as though you were in the middle of a very good wood. Oh, it was great, great' (15 June 2014). Kelly, at Blaise Castle, also indicated that she felt drawn into the story as a result of moving through the grounds:

The area was a really nice area—that little house, whatever you want to call it, em—helped, I think, just make it a part of everything. I suppose it's just a really nice area. That helps. The amphitheatre here is just a nice place to kind of give people, I suppose, used to the traditional sort of seating...and then it goes off into other areas, it really did bring you into it. It was superb. (20 July 2014)

As with the theme already discussed at Sprite's *Dream*, the audience's journey into the woods contributed to bringing about a feeling of participation that was derived from a sense of sharing the same spaces as the play's events, demonstrating no sense of anyone being taken in by an illusion of realism. At Thompson's Park, Beth remarked, 'The performance drew you in and took you on a journey around the park' (17 June 2014) and Jess interrupted her, saying, 'So the fact that they were surrounded by trees and I liked all of the up and downs as well so the audience felt like they were on a journey with the actors or with their characters' (17 June 2014). Beth continued, 'It felt like you were engaged all of the time. You're sort of made to be involved in it. You're an active participant in it, which was a good thing. It made you follow the story more in that way' (17 June 2014).

Like responses to Sprite's *Dream*, references to the actual parks in which Taking Flight performed were abundant, but they tended to be unspecific; not excavating strata of palimpsestic spaces but layering new stories over what was already there. For Dale, the journey through the park felt like a journey through Shakespeare's play:

There was a beautiful atmospheric echo that happened when the actors were really getting into it. The environment, the promenade of the environment, up and down the hills made it feel a lot more like you were traipsing through forests and made you feel much more involved in the show. (18 June 2014)

Sarah and Tim enjoyed the idea that they were walking the same route as Shakespeare's characters, literally following in their footsteps:

Sarah: I think the landscape helps. You know, as opposed to it being just a flat stage with a background. It's more interactive, you know, you feel like you're on the journey that the characters are on.

Tim: Yeah. You feel part of it really.

Sarah: I think just in general the setting with, you know, *As You Like It* takes part in a forest so having the trees and having the rolling hills it helps to put you in the right position and frame of mind to... to be not just a part of the show itself but to kind of relate it to the performance. (18 June 2014)

Sarah's equation of landscape with lived terrain rather than with something primarily visual—a static backdrop—is something I discuss in more detail in Chapter Four. Many of the comments about feeling like a participant in the performance overlapped with references to nature, though, which occasionally returned to thoughts of Shakespeare. Chantelle explained:

Well, I thought the unique part of it all was the setting. The setting was absolutely beautiful. And moving around the park, I've never seen anything like it before. It was wonderful. We were integrated as part of the play. It was almost as though we were just playing a part as well. So very Shakespearean. It was great. You got very close to the actors. At times we were almost part of the performance. (18 June 2014)

'Shakespearean' in Chantelle's comments seemed to equate to an intimate, shared experience, evoking the nostalgia of some of the responses considered in Chapter One. However much the quest for the 'spirit' of the original performances has been exposed as an ideological myth (Holderness 1988), there remained a sense that the 'authentic' Shakespeare was more accessible outdoors and, moreover, that 'Shakespearean' might be used as an adjective to describe *any* kind of positive theatrical experience. Basis in historical fact was always secondary to the present, pleasant encounter with performance, recalling but not quite replicating the avant-garde nostalgia identified at the Willow Globe (Soper 2011).

While Arnold Aronson points out that 'the most difficult aspect of performing in found environments is the achievement and maintenance of focus' (1981: 170), audiences at Taking Flight's performances explained that they focussed more on the performance because of its taking place in a 'found environment'. In an extension of the 'freedom' reported at Sprite's *Dream*, the audience responses also verified McAuley's proposition that 'The freedom to choose what to focus on is an important part of the risk of live performance, and an important part of that sense for taking responsibility for one's own experience' (1999: 271). Tim reflected on previous experiences of *As You Like It*, finding that walking between the scenes encouraged him to invest more in the story. Rather than being distracted by other park users, he took responsibility for concentrating on the play himself:

I've lived in Stratford upon Avon and I've seen it on stage with Paul Bettany—I think it was at the time—but to come to a park and to feel slightly more involved I think

it's a lot more fun and a lot more...It's a lot more performance focussed, I think, because there's so much extra going on around you that I think you just have to keep going on and as an audience it makes you pay that little bit more attention. (18 June 2014)

Mona, Donna, and Lynn also felt more engaged with the performance because of the journey it took around the park:

Mona: It was much better than sitting in one position for the whole time. Yeah. I mean we could sit at times, which I wanted to at one point but, you know, when you're in a theatre you just sit so still.

Donna: So it was fun. You're more engaged.

Lynn: Yeah. It keeps your attention. (14 June 2014)

Mona elaborated:

Because you were up on your feet I think it gave you a bit more energy to sort of put into watching the performance. Because even if you're just sat in the theatre or even if you're just sat watching the performance or having a picnic when you're watching it, I do think you switch off a little bit. (14 June 2014)

Moving around the busy parks encouraged audience members to be more attentive to the performance. They had to choose to move between the scenes if they wanted to engage with the performance and the act of moving fostered a feeling of participation that encouraged them to concentrate on the play. Like Sprite's work, then, *Taking Flight's* attempts to collaborate with the parks in which they were working brought about a greater sense of engagement with the plays. The invitation to notice nature in lesser frequented parts of the parks did encourage ditch vision—playing with scale to imagine one tree as more (Hooker in Kerridge 2009: 133)—but, by encouraging audience members to see one or two trees for Arden, the trees became metaphors for generic fairy tale woodlands (Rebellato 2009: 25). The result was that the patches of nature the performances sought out functioned ecomimetically, substituting the parks' 'real' nature for the aestheticized Nature of the play (Morton 2007). As with Sprite's *Dream*, moving through the parks with *Taking Flight's As You Like It* had the ironic effect of de-privileging place, even as it privileged the play in the place.

Questions of participation, however, were more complex at *Taking Flight's* performances, perhaps, than they were at Sprite's work, given *Taking Flight's* diverse target audience and the production's emphasis on the physical activity of moving. What was interesting about *Taking Flight's* approach to staging was how the performance created a sense of adventure through the parks while ensuring that the journey was simultaneously accessible to all audience members. The performance intervened in existing narratives of the

park spaces, in the sense that people who might not usually be thought of as able to use the parks in certain ways—as audience members or actors in a Shakespeare play—embarked on highly mobile journeys.⁵⁸ Bree Hadley, writing on *Disability, Public Space and Spectatorship* (2013), argues that ‘interventionist’ (8-17) performances in public space have the potential to generate ‘a chance—not a certainty—that spectators will start to reflect, reconsider the scripts that underpin their social interactions, and, potentially, come to a change of perception they can carry through into future dealings with disabled people’ (15). While Taking Flight’s work was far from the consciously ‘interventionist’ performances that Hadley writes about, there was sufficient evidence in audience responses to *As You Like It* to suggest that the company’s approach to outdoor space facilitated a kind of intervention anyway, irrespective of whether or not this might carry over into future behaviours.

But while the staging of *As You Like It* might have extended an implicit invitation to reconsider how the park was used, audience members only obliquely commented on the politics of the production’s spatial relationship with the park. What I noticed was that the audience members did not speak about disability directly but used language that was positive and imprecise. Potentially because of a disinclination to dwell on disability in light of Taking Flight’s celebration of difference, possibly because of discomfort in referring explicitly to disability or lacking a language to do so, and also, possibly, because of the initial questions I asked—representing a shortcoming in the methodology—the responses that alluded to disability did so only vaguely. Nevertheless, these kinds of comments appeared more in audience responses to Taking Flight’s performances than they did at any other performance, enough to make them identifiably unique to this work. Sara and Tim conversed about the physical effort of partaking in the performance, commending its inclusivity:

Sara: It’s demanding on your back but it’s worth it.

Tim: Yeah, it’s worth it and it helps that we’re in a ground with, you know, varying abilities, disabilities, you know. I mean Sara was saying she’s got a bad back and I’ve got a bad knee, you know, so moving around is hard but it’s good because it involves everyone. It’s a little arduous getting up the hill but it’s... it does involve everyone and I think that’s definitely something to commend. (18 June 2014)

Dale referred to the sign-language incorporated into the performance in terms of inclusivity, saying ‘I enjoyed the musical inclusiveness of the show and the humour they brought to the whole piece. And especially the signing that happened and how they made it funny, not useful. I thought every single member of the cast were excellent’ (18 June 2014). Implied by

⁵⁸ I am thankful to Alicia Grace for bringing this way of thinking about walking, disability, and constructions of normalcy in environmental writing, arts practices and ‘the mobility turn’ to my attention (Wilkie 2012). Not everyone walks on two legs.

Dale's comments was the idea that sign language is usually a means to interpreting a performance rather than integral to the performance itself. Holly elaborated, 'Well, naturally theatre outside is just a great idea because naturally more people get involved. And it's a much more inclusive idea because it doesn't feel so elitist as maybe going to a theatre itself' (18 June 2014). Holly's comments might be taken to refer to the perceived inclusiveness of outdoor theatre in public spaces generally, but they also led on to reflections on Taking Flight's socially-engaged objectives. She went on to say, 'The audience being outside, everyone just seems a bit more relaxed. A bit more fun. I think it brings new people along. The children were enthusiastic. I mean it's opening up a new diversity. It's opening up to new ideas. It's fresh and it's out there' (18 June 2014). Chantelle explained, 'You really do feel that it's more open, more free and that no one is judging you' (18 June 14).

Given Taking Flight's approach to staging, it does not seem coincidental that words like 'diversity', 'inclusivity', and 'judgement' appeared only in responses to their work and nowhere else, appearing to suggest that audience members were inclined to try to articulate the performance's achievements in terms of a spatial intervention in public parks. It follows that, unlike Sprite's *Dream*, audience responses to Taking Flight's *As You Like It* indicated that the performance was 'responding to and interrogating a range of current spatial concerns' and 'investigating the spatial dimension of contemporary identities' (Wilkie 2008: 89), however indirectly. Taking Flight's practical nod towards site-specific and immersive performance forms—enacted through the mobile staging and interactive exposition—simultaneously challenged its audience and other park users to think about who can access the parks, and how. It also represented a challenge to the kinds of actor and the kinds of bodies that usually get to perform Shakespeare. In which case, the anthropocentric writing over of the parks with Shakespeare's woodland fairy story can be seen as secondary to the writing over of the parks with positive stories around access for differently-abled groups of people.

What neither Taking Flight's *As You Like It* nor Sprite's *Dream* did, however, was to encourage the stories and histories of the spaces in which they were performing to surface in ways that made meaning alongside their performances. Cyfartha Castle, Thompson's Park, and Blaise Castle were always secondary to the imagined Arden. Even though audience accounts of the performances devoted much time to place, they tended to be thinking about the places in terms of the plays rather than the places in their own right (Pearson 2010: 194). They did not 'privilege place' (Wilkie 2008: 89), nor did they enable 'the material presence and the historically accrued meanings of the performance space to make meaning of and intrude upon the text' (Escolme 2012: 510). The closest I came to encountering any such

place-based meaning-making was in responses to Teatro Vivo's adaptation, *After The Tempest*, which finishes the chapter and highlights some of the potential for incorporating aspects of site-specific and immersive performance practices into outdoor Shakespeares.⁵⁹



Fig 2.4. Josephine Wilson as Audrey, Ben Owen Jones as Duke Frederick and Connor Allen as Orlando (2014), photograph by Jorge Lizalde Cano.

Teatro Vivo's *After The Tempest*

Teatro Vivo is a professional theatre company based in South East London, working in non-theatre environments and aiming to 'turn everyday environments into magical worlds' (Teatro Vivo 2014). *After The Tempest*, a ninety minute adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, was created with support from the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum and toured to five different park spaces in July and August 2013. Aware of the inherent contradictions of trying to make site-specific performance for different parks, but aiming to go further than the kind of site-generic work made by *Taking Flight*, director Sophie Austin explained that she wanted 'to create a play that would be one thing in one park and entirely another in another park' (2013). Austin aspired to use the performance to intervene in existing narratives of the parks, explaining:

I think it's about doing something different with the park. Because a park is generally somewhere you go during the day to walk your dog or to stretch your legs or to run

⁵⁹ 'Adaptation' is a much contested term, especially in the context of Shakespeare and contemporary performance (Cohn 1976; Fischlin and Fortier 2000; Hutcheon 2006; Kidnie 2009). I am using adaptation after Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier's definition of a work 'which, through verbal and theatrical devices, radically alter[s] the shape and significance of another work so as to invoke that work and yet be different from it' (2000: 4). The only example of such an adaptation in this thesis is arguably Teatro Vivo's *After The Tempest*, which fits the description of having 'radically altered' *The Tempest*.

around you know but we're inviting you to come to the park after it's closed often and to be in the place when you shouldn't be. (2013)

The premise for *After The Tempest* was that the island's 'spirits' were re-enacting the events of Shakespeare's play on location to celebrate a year's independence from its former leader, Prospero. Booking a ticket for the performance prompted an email from Ariel—'sent by magic powers'—inviting the audience member to the Independence Day celebrations. The invite playfully communicated practical advice and advocated a responsible approach to being in the parks, an environmental message woven into the email.

This humble theatrical event will take you to the most far-flung and beautiful parts of our land, so please bring sensible footwear and be aware that some of the more junior spirits may find it amusing to burst rain clouds overhead from time to time, so umbrellas may be a wise precaution. Finally, as the Island slowly recovers from its fettered history, please respect our 'leave no trace' policy, and take nothing but pictures, kill nothing but time, leave nothing but footprints and keep only memories. (Email from Ariel 2 July 2013)

Upon arrival in the parks, audience members were given a feather (air) or pinecone (earth) talisman to wear, dividing into groups of 'spirits' who followed different paths through the parks. Ariel, the island's new and tyrannical leader, orchestrated the re-enactment while reluctant participant Caliban enlisted the audience in a coup d'état. The re-enacted scenes returned the audiences to the very places where the play's events first occurred; ghosting the park spaces with imagined waymarkers and—as with *Sprite's* and *Taking Flight's* work—writing over the park with the Shakespeare story. As the actors guided the audience between the scenes, they engaged audience members in improvised and provocative conversations about nature, land ownership, marriage, and political leadership. The dialogue encouraged its audiences to notice nature they might not otherwise have seen in the parks, while simultaneously reflecting on and challenging Shakespeare's text, asking, 'What would be better than this?' (in relation to land ownership and claims on the island), and, 'What are we going to do about it?' (through attempts to enlist the audience in a revolution). As with the responses to *Taking Flight's* mission of inclusivity, however, the thematic resonances between *After the Tempest* and questions of access and spatial control in the park only appeared cursorily in audience responses.

The first of two places I draw from here is Barking Park, South East London, which in 2013 had undergone an extensive regeneration project with assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The second is Holland Park, West London, which in 2013 was hosting events for the In Transit Festival of which *After The Tempest* was part: 'A festival of new work responding to and reflecting the unique environment and character of Kensington and Chelsea' (In Transit 2013). The respective boroughs of 'Barking and Dagenham' and

‘Kensington and Chelsea’ occupied opposite ends of the 2013 London Poverty Profile (London Poverty Profile 2013). It would be therefore all too easy to assume that at Barking—with some of the highest unemployment and long-term sick benefits rate in London—*After The Tempest* functioned as an improving force, whereas at Holland Park—renowned as an elite opera venue—Shakespeare simply affirmed the park’s high cultural status. The audience responses to *After The Tempest* unsettled both of these problematic uses of Shakespeare, apparently arising from the company’s careful attention to space, their adaptation of the text, reframing and constantly questioning Shakespeare’s narrative, and from their direct challenges to the audience.



2.5. Chalk prints on the footpath at Barking Park, leading to Teatro Vivo’s *After the Tempest* (2013)

At Barking Park, social media posts signalled that chalk paw-prints would point the way to a makeshift box-office outside the park’s newly opened café (where I spotted children covering them with leaves and rubbing them out). The pre-booked audience for *After The Tempest* at Barking was small—sometimes comprising fewer than 15 people—but further park users stumbled across the performance and stayed to watch to the end. From what I observed, the audience at Barking included a few locals, as well as people who had seen Teatro Vivo’s work previously and had travelled to support the company. Tina, from Barking’s Broadway Theatre, had prior knowledge of the park through visits to feed the ducks with her grandchildren. She explained that she had come to *After The Tempest*, ‘Because it was outside and because it was in this particular park and because it’s quite close to where I live and I just wouldn’t miss it’ (18 July 2013). Izzy, who had travelled to support a friend

in the cast, had never been to the park in Barking and was surprised by what she saw there, implying that her preconceptions of the place had been disrupted. She commented:

I think what I'm going to most remember to be honest is...em...just... I've never been to this park before and I didn't know Barking had a park. I've been out of the tube station before but I haven't ventured out so I think just how surprisingly beautiful the park is because it hasn't got a good reputation as a place. So surprisingly beautiful. (18 July 2013)

Postcards from the field

Barking. Struck by absence of audience. What interest absence for audience research? Signals lack of interest in Shakespeare in Barking? Absence of marketing or something else?

(Field notes 18 July 2013)

In stark contrast with Barking's busy high street and market, the journey from Holland Park tube station to the park took the walker down wide tree-lined roads, past extensive white houses, driveways with expensive-looking cars, occasional restaurants, and wine bars. Actors dressed as spirits met audience members near the opera café and escorted us to a relatively unkempt wooded area. It was impossible not to hear the orchestra warming up for the rarely-performed *I gioielli della Madonna* by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari or not to note the contrast between the waterproof-clad audience members for *After The Tempest* and the smartly-dressed operagoers, passing on their way in. There was no chalk on the paths at Holland Park, and Jenny, who had struggled to find the meeting place, laughed as she anticipated the promenade aspect of the performance, 'We've already got lost finding our way here so if we have to navigate, we're buggered!' (25 July 2013). Freya compared the setting to 'a manicured Hampstead Heath. It's a cute little park' (25 July 2013)—the implication being that Hampstead was wilder than Holland Park, comparatively. Laura added, 'But bits of it we walked through are really manicured and regal and beautiful. It used to be a private estate so that... It was a Jacobean estate, I think, and I feel like I still see remnants of that, which is interesting. Yeah. It's beautiful' (25 July 2013). A conversation with Harry, Lucy, and Kirsty, who were familiar with Teatro Vivo's work, suggested that Holland Park was an unusual venue for the company.

Harry: It's really nice and relaxing.

Lucy: I guess, like, yeah, a leafy park in upper class London. [*Laughter*] It's not the surroundings I'm used to. Coming down High St Kenn... It's a whole different part of London to what I'm used to really.

Harry: It's nice that I suppose somewhere like Holland Park... I suppose you associate with, you know, quite upper class.

Lucy: Yeah. You can hear the opera.

Harry: Yeah. It's nice that they've obviously let Teatro Vivo do it in the space and, em, it's, I suppose, a novel way of seeing Holland Park. (25 July 2013)

Their journey to Holland Park had prompted feelings of their being out of place, suggesting that Holland Park was generous to 'allow' Teatro Vivo in. Bella, who had travelled from Shoreditch, compounded this sense of Teatro Vivo's nonbelonging in Holland Park when she said, 'It's a different kind of park as well... not where they normally do stuff because it's like, it's quite a swanky area. And normally they don't like swanky places' (25 July 2013). For these audience members, the adaptation of Shakespeare—an affirmer of middle-brow culture at Ripley Castle—became the alternative or transgressor when juxtaposed with Holland Park's opera.

But Holland Park meant something else to those who lived nearby. Samia, who lived locally, explained that she had booked the event as a family treat to make the most of the good weather. They were consciously avoiding the opera but keen to see something in Holland Park.

Basically, I booked it because it was my daughter's birthday. She wanted to...I thought she'd want to see something open air and she's quite interested in Shakespeare and this was the nearest thing that we could find on her actual birthday. So we thought it would be something that would appeal to everybody rather than being stuck in a cinema. I knew she wouldn't like opera particularly so that's how we've ended up here. (25 July 2013)

Like Samia's family, locals Coral and Dave were drawn to *After The Tempest* precisely because of its taking place in Holland Park. They explained:

Dave: The location here in Holland Park is quite magical. Especially once the evening starts to set in. This is a wonderful park, actually a magical park in my opinion.

Coral: So...He thinks there are fairies in it!

Dave: That magic was brought more...It worked with the production.

Coral: I think they were very lucky to have Holland Park. It may not have worked so well in some other park. But Holland Park's ideal for this kind of activity. (25 July 2013)

Coming out of this conversation was the reiteration and overlap of the familiar 'magic' theme—recalling Robert Watson's 'placeholder for phenomena with pending explanation' (2006: 36) discussed in Chapter One—and also the suggestion that *After The Tempest* might

not have worked as successfully elsewhere: here at Holland Park, Shakespeare was a fairy tale.

As with the responses to Sprite's and Taking Flight's performances, George, who had happened upon *After The Tempest* when he was out for a walk in Barking Park, indicated that moving with the performance encouraged him to pay greater attention to the play. He explained, 'I enjoyed the way it kept going in and out of the play and I was kind of intrigued to see where it was going next' (18 July 2013). Melissa, who had been walking with him, found that moving with the performance helped to sustain her interest too. She said, 'Yeah. In some ways I think it makes... I feel like I was concentrating more than I might have done in a theatre because you're, because you get to move and because you kind of have the outdoor fresh air and things' (18 July 2013). For Stacy, whose children had been playing in the park and had become interested in the performance, walking between scenes also kept her interest. She spoke to her young daughter afterwards:

Stacy: For me it was a little bit of a struggle because I had the pushchair. How did you find walking around, Millie?

Millie: Fun.

Stacy: Fun? You found it fun? What was fun about it?

Millie: Because we got to see lots of different things.

Stacy: Because we got to see lots of different things. Yeah, that's true. The change of scenery with the different scenes was really exciting actually and it kind of added a new atmosphere to things and it kind of, yeah, that was really, really good. I think that worked really well and it, kind of, keeps you getting up and moving, kind of, keeps you in the moment, stops you drifting off. (18 July 2013)

As with the audience responses to Sprite's *Dream* and Taking Flight's *As You Like It*, moving from scene to scene with *After The Tempest*—Teatro Vivo's formal gesture towards site-specific practices—actually had the effect of encouraging greater focus on the performance.

This sense of the performance engaging more than 'generically' with the parks was partially achieved through the actors' commitment to the story that the performance's events had previously happened in these parks in their improvised dialogue. They took care to draw attention to the park's 'materials' (Ingold 2011: 32), asking the trees to stand in for the woods of Shakespeare's play and simultaneously drawing attention to their lively materiality in a way that was both 'generic' and 'specific'. Kas Darley, for instance, who played Ariel, brought audience members to a tree—a giant London Plane in Barking Park and at Holland Park, it was a silver birch—and explained that bark from this very tree had made the flutes that would play to encourage Ferdinand (Tom Ross Williams) and Miranda (Natasha Magigi) to

fall in love. Darley touched the tree and looked up into its branches, asking audiences to imagine that the performance had a tangible home in the park.

Audience member Elliot responded to this moment in the performance when he said:

I liked the sleeping thing on the tree. It's just quite a well set out park with having the different sections so you kind of feel like they could just be on an island in a way and they're coming out of nature really. And there's very limited props what they had. A lot of it was made from wood and sticks that they found here and it incorporated a lot of what was around. (18 July 2013)

Elliot seemed to allow Barking Park to stand in for Shakespeare's island, without wholly subscribing to the illusion that he was actually on the island. Izzy also suggested that she noticed nature she might not otherwise have seen because of the journey through Barking Park. She found a little more than Shakespeare in the cracks:

I thought that was em, it's really, really beautiful and it kind of feels like, I don't know, it's kind of like, like it's not as boring because there's a lot of things to capture your visual attention and there's a lot of distractions but it's nice, you notice things you haven't noticed before because you don't take the time to look at them. So just scenery wise – just trees and it's nice when there were some squirrels involved, getting in on the action. That was nice. (18 July 2013)

There was 'ditch vision' in both Izzy's and Eliot's noticing nature (Hooker in Kerridge 2009: 133)—to which the discussion of 'enchantment' in Chapter Four gives more weight (Bennett: 2001)—but they also subscribed to metaphorical theatrical representation (Rebellato 2009), subsuming the vibrant matter (Bennett 2010) of the parks into the aesthetic, and possibly also succumbing to the double-bind of Morton's ecomimesis (2007). There are no squirrels in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, but fairy tales make as good a home as London parks for fluffy rodents. Squirrels are always squirrels—and vibrantly so—but it was possible to imagine them standing in for the squirrels Shakespeare didn't write in *After The Tempest* in the woods.

Further conversation revealed that Coral and Dave—whose conversation about fairies in Holland Park I cited above—had a prior personal relationship with Holland Park, challenging reductive understandings of Holland Park as a place simply of leisure or high culture. This arose during our discussion of the performance's final scene, which was presented in scrubland on the outskirts of the park that had to be accessed through a locked gate off the public paths, through trees, stumbling over roots and branches in the dusk.

Coral: And we've seen it in Regent's Park. But, it's more poignant for us because we used to know the people that lived in the house that was here.

Evelyn: Oh wow. And it's no more a house?

Dave: No more a house.

Coral: And it was a head-gardener's house.

Dave: You can feel it underneath our feet.

Evelyn: So when did it come down – the house?

Dave: It must be ten years ago.

Coral: So the gardener doesn't live here anymore... I mean doesn't live on site. I don't know why...but we knew the people that lived here.

Dave: And the mum is dead now isn't she?

Coral: So when we came in here it felt really sort of poignant.

Dave: So there was another layer there as well. (25 July 2013)

Coral and Dave's experience of the space was socially situated in their own memories of people, ghosts of dwellings, and prior uses of the land, as well as the immediate experience of the play. Austin explained that park management had been unwilling initially for the overgrown, untended space to be used for the performance and that she had campaigned hard for permission to use it: she was not aware that once there had once been a house on the site (2013).

Postcards from the field

Frogs sharing long, wet grass. Un-risk-assessed feel of journey through gates and in the dark. Surprising, secret destination. Discovering wilderness in the middle of the city! (though over railings to right and through gaps in vegetation, spy High Street Kenn looming grand.

(Field notes 25 July 2013)

What seems important about Teatro Vivo is less the measure of their success but the reflexivity, the attentiveness to the parks and to nature as collaborators, and the environmental aspiration to leave no visible trace, while also seeking to intervene in existing narratives of the parks—leaving invisible traces—with their work. Austin reflected on what she felt the performance had achieved during its limited run:

I think the performance really allowed people to see the parks in a new light and took them away from whether it was a place where they walked their dog or they had never been before and created something really quite magical that allowed them to consider their own world in a very different way. I think all the park people, all the park managers that we worked with felt very strongly that the park had lived in a different aspect to what was normal and were keen to do it again. (2013)

As Dream and *As You Like It*, *After The Tempest* brought audiences off the beaten track and into the woods. More so than *Sprite* or *Taking Flight*, though, Teatro Vivo sought out rather than papered over the cracks. For all their vagaries and scarcity, audience responses to *After The Tempest* were more placed than responses to *Dream* or *As You Like It*. The adaptation encouraged its audiences to consider their surroundings thoughtfully, using Shakespeare as a starting point to write alternative stories for the parks, without working with assumptions that Shakespeare must be inherently improving to a place.



Figure 2.6. Natasha Magigi as Miranda and Tom Ross Williams as Ferdinand, photograph by Sophie Austin (2013)

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the work of three different theatre companies and their attempts to make use of forms of site-specific, immersive, and promenade practices in outdoor Shakespeares. Each of the productions differed from the model of performance found at Minack and the Willow Globe in that audiences moved from scene to scene, following the actors. By and large, however, the effect tended to be the fostering of greater engagement with the stories being presented. In practitioners' attempts to 'collaborate with space', the collaboration tended to privilege the play: collaboration tended to mean working with the space so that it suited the play and so that the play felt at home there, rather than thinking about setting up a 'reciprocal' relationship (Tschumi in Pearson 2010: 38). The parks were perceived as the natural places for the plays, oftentimes performing the problematic function of spatial containers for Shakespeare's stories, serving the performances. While audience members spoke a lot about the places where the plays took place—as Pearson's

measure of site-specificity imagined such performances might (2010: 194)—they did so by suggesting that the places supported the plays rather than the other way round. While the performances brought attention to place, they tended to do so in the context of the plays, writing over the parks—spatially and temporally—with fairy tale readings of Shakespeare’s stories. The chapter’s epigraph from Edward Casey, ‘Notice that I can know I am here without knowing where I am’ (2009: 54), resonates with the audience responses across all three performances.

It was also, perhaps, a sense that the place seemed appropriate for the play that corresponded with the self-description by these theatre companies of their work as ‘immersive’. Audience members often described feeling as though they were participating in the story, as well as participating in the adventure into the woods. They may have had no control over the events in the plays, but they suggested enough freedom of movement to propose that they were not as restrained or manipulated as Dobson had suggested audiences for promenade performance might be (2005: 24). Illusory or not, they described freedom of choice around how to interact with the performances as part of a process of defining their own participation. Although the performances were only cursorily participatory, in the sense of utilising audience interaction, they fostered a sense of participation in the theatrical events, if not in the performances themselves.

As well as the shared themes within the audience feedback, Taking Flight and Teatro Vivo also engaged, in different ways, with questions of access to outdoor public space and access to Shakespeare, generating responses that were unique to these productions. Taking Flight’s challenge was presented implicitly in the ownership of Shakespeare by differently-abled groups of people, moving through public parks. Teatro Vivo’s came in the form of themes of control and access highlighted in their adaptation of *The Tempest*. The final example of Coral and Dave responding to ‘traces of other usages’ in a locked area of Holland Park demonstrated the potential of this kind of performance to bring about ‘a creative friction between the past and present’ and to highlight ‘the temporality of place’ (Pearson and Shanks 2001: 111). It also reinforced the idea that audience members always carry their senses of place with them, and that these have implications for how performance is received.

Ecologically, the audience responses raised troubling questions about what was *in* the bits of wildness, in the ditches that stood in for Shakespeare’s woods? We ventured into the woods, sought out wildness and peered into the cracks only to find our human image—standing in for early modern theatre, standing in for fairy tales—reflected right back at us. The closeness of the metaphor to metonymy, the scenic verisimilitude of the trees as both

Shakespeare's trees and 'real' trees tended towards ecomimesis (Morton 2007), where 'real' nature was presented through a highly mediated form of culture, aestheticizing Nature and preserving distance from it. But, as Maitland points out, the woodland settings for fairy-tales are actually more placed than we have previously cared to think (2012: 7), and a woodland retelling of Shakespeare—however problematic in terms of its incongruity with early modern theatrical practice or the erasure of local and cultural histories—might also offer a decent example of 'woods performing woods', grasping for their ontological status as 'trees' through the fairy tale optic with which audiences looked. If woodland fairy tale settings have been woodlands all along, then maybe these woods, imagined as fairy tale woods, were actually always vibrant, 'lively and essentially interactive materials' (Bennett in Grusin 2015: 224) and a little less victims of ecomimetic aestheticization than they initially appeared to be. In the second part of the thesis I go on to argue that in a world where Forest Schools, Forest Therapy, and Nature Deficit Disorder are real things, Shakespeare in the woods, in parks, in gardens, and by the sea might contribute to broader discussions of theatre, performance, and ecology within a certain culturally-specific construction of what it means to be outdoors.

PART TWO: Environment

The first part of this thesis has focused on themes identified in audience responses at particular places and in response to particular performances, emphasizing the local and the particular. The reader will likely have already noticed, however, areas of overlap within the interview extracts presented thus far. Part Two now looks at themes that recurred throughout the conversations with audience members across the range of outdoor performance contexts. Chapters Three and Four work through some of the topics that were repeated in audience responses at all of the performances—wildlife, light and darkness, landscape and weather—identifying themes that might be more generally applicable to the audience experience of outdoor Shakespeares. Raymond Williams lists ‘birds, trees, effects of weather and light’ (1985: 133) as examples of what he calls ‘the green language’ that began to appear, described in detail, in Romantic English literature during the latter half of the 1800s, responding to processes of industrialization and the loss of rural landscapes in Britain (127-141). In the audience responses, I am equally interested in how these ‘things’ were perceived as present in their own right and at looking at how audience members ascribed to them certain cultural meanings in the context of a Shakespeare play performed in an outdoor environment. To emphasise the wide spread of certain ideas, I jump freely between case studies and interviews as I work through the rest of the ethnography. Occasionally, I dwell a little longer with one performance or in one place to highlight something anomalous. As well as drawing from interviews conducted at the places and performances discussed in Chapters One and Two, I now add responses to Heartbreak Productions’ touring *Romeo and Juliet* in 2013, as outlined in the Methodology chapter. The ethnography continues to further the argument for a need to think about what is common to these performances as ‘outdoors’, even as it acknowledges and questions this understanding of what ‘outdoors’ actually means as fluid, unstable and culturally contingent.

To assist the reader to trace the diverse range of spaces, performances, and conditions from which the following interview extracts are taken, I have added a code referencing the places of performance, alongside the date for Chapters Three and Four. WG stands for Willow Globe, M for Minack, S for Sprite Productions, TF for Taking Flight (plus T for Thompson’s Park, B for Blaise Castle, and C for Cyfarthfa Castle), TV for Teatro Vivo (plus B for Barking Park and H for Holland Park), and HB for Heartbreak (plus B for Brandon Hill, Bristol, M for Cucking Stool Mead, Malmesbury, and G for Greenway, South Devon).

CHAPTER THREE: Nature playing (along, sometimes): affective atmospheres, wildlife, light and darkness

Pigeons at Shakespeare's Globe have already received considerable scholarly attention (Carroll in Carson and Karim-Cooper 2008: 39; Shaughnessy 2012; Woods 2012: 252). Penelope Woods recounts the memorable anecdote of a pigeon landing on stage at that theatre during Tim Carroll's production of *Macbeth*, just as actor Jasper Britton spoke, 'A poor player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage...'. Britton watched the pigeon and waited for it to fly off before finishing, '...and then is heard no more' (2012: 252). This is what Woods refers to as the 'aleatoric effect' of Shakespeare's Globe—after John Cage's experimental music of the 1950s and 1960s—and she takes the term to refer to chance encounters between unplanned intrusions from the 'real' world and moments in staged performance, coincidentally timed so as to make meaning for the spectator (246). Woods cites Werner Meyer-Eppeler's definition of 'aleatory' from music journal *Die Reihe* to explain her take on the term: 'Aleatoric is the name given to processes where large-scale course is determined, the case of individual elements however being dependent on chance' (Meyer-Eppeler in Woods 2012: 250). In the case of Britton's pigeon, nature was momentarily subsumed into culture, making the 'large-scale course' appear anthropocentrically determined. Britton's response to that particular pigeon at that particular moment in that particular theatre produced the aleatoric effect of Shakespeare's Globe.

While it is important to note that 'aleatory' does not always denote 'large-scale' meaning making and is more commonly understood in generalized terms of chance, Woods's use of the term is a helpful pointer to what the solid frame around the sky does to the reception of nature within the circumference of Shakespeare's Globe. She writes:

Unlike interruptions to a performance in stately-home gardens, or at Minack in Cornwall or the Regent's Park Outdoor Theatre in London, the enclosed and purpose-built space of the Globe frames and determines a potential and significant momentary role for these interruptions within the performance, whereas they are more likely to be experienced as incidental and circumstantial, and hence not 'determined' and 'determining', at other outdoor theatre events. (2012: 251)

Such a structure as Shakespeare's Globe, Woods quite rightly observes, generates different responses to those that might result from the open, sometimes chaotic experience of other, less confined outdoor spaces (although by grouping Regent's Park, Minack, and stately home gardens together, she overlooks some of the diversity of these spaces). Even at the Willow Globe, the boundaries between inside and out are more porous, more permeable than they are at the London reconstruction it emulates. The significant difference is that the

framed sky within the architecture of the wooden O assists in keeping the play at the heart of the theatrical event. For an actor to acknowledge every pigeon/rainshower/helicopter would be relentless, but Woods finds that the frame affords the actor a choice either to inscribe the pigeon with meaning or to ignore it completely (256). Shakespeare's Globe's bounded but roofless architecture privileges person over nature.

But even notwithstanding the diminished likelihood of determining collaborations between nature and play, the fortuitous coincidence of Britton's pigeon still circulated as a kind of grail, a potentiality, among audience members at the performances I studied. Nathan, for instance, captured some of this anticipation when he enthused:

And you never know, one day you might just get that opportune noise...just at the right moment...you know, you might just get that crack of thunder as one of the witches stands up in *Macbeth*. You never know...you just never know. It makes it much more exciting. (25 May 2013 WG)

A deluge came down just as Prospero conjured his tempest. A rainstorm hit while Lear was out on the blasted heath only to clear up by the interval. Sunshine broke through heavy cloud as Hermione descended her platform, alive. Puck flew across the water just as the only cloud in a starry sky drifted to reveal a crescent moon. A duck quacked along in iambic pentameter (really). Someone was always delighted that they had been there. Someone always remembered; anecdotes traded and trumped. These anecdotes, however, tended to be mythologized memories of what did happen, or excitement around what might happen, rather than examples of what happened just now.

A brief consideration of Michael Dobson's retelling of 'the most famous of all Minack anecdotes' (2011: 182) begins to illustrate the difference between the aleatoric effect Woods identifies at Shakespeare's Globe and the more open outdoor spaces of this study. Dobson writes of a barque crashing into the rocks behind the stage at Minack during a foggy opening performance of *The Tempest* in 1932 (182-183). He is tellingly short on detail. What happened next? Did the play carry on or did the cast abandon the performance, alert the coastguard and scramble down the rocks to rescue the crew? Or was the ship not badly damaged after all and safe to sail away after its temporary mishap? In which case, the excitement *The Tempest's* audience felt that night must have been more muted than the story suggests. Neither is Dobson's anecdote—which works best as a vague retelling—recalled alongside any lines from *The Tempest* as Britton's *Macbeth* pigeon is remembered.

My attempt in this chapter is to understand what kinds of effects *were* perceived as being produced by wildlife, light and darkness outdoors if they were not perceived as

‘determined or determining’? What was the experience of the ‘incidental and circumstantial’ at outdoor Shakespeares if nature only haphazardly or occasionally interacted with the action of the play? If fortuitous encounters between nature and performance were relatively scarce, how was their presence more frequently thought of in the moment of reception? Woods concedes that despite the framing of the sky nature still has the potential to undermine on-stage performance at Shakespeare’s Globe, because it ‘not only fails to be matrixed by performance, but may even disrupt performance with its prevailing mundanity’ (2012: 256). As I go on to explore audience responses to outdoor Shakespeares in places other than at Shakespeare’s Globe, my argument is that nature was perceived to be occasionally interacting, sometimes interrupting, and always circulating, mundane only in the sense of being of this earthly world, but never in the pejorative sense of the term.

Atmosphere

Until relatively recently, ‘atmosphere’ was something of a deplorable word in theatre and performance studies. A bit like ‘magic’, ‘liveness’, or ‘energy’, ‘atmosphere’ was vague, clichéd and uncritical: the kind of naive gush that might come from someone in a theatre audience. It is worth noting, though, that despite its murky status as a term in scholarship, ‘atmosphere’ pops up occasionally in even the most rigorous accounts of outdoor Shakespeares, without much explication. Rosemary Gaby ends her article on Ozact’s Theatre Company’s site-specific practices by positing that, for Ozact’s audiences, ‘Atmosphere counts for much more than scenic verisimilitude’ (2011: 77), and Stephen Purcell refers to how place must affect responses to Creation Theatre Company’s work by generating an ‘atmosphere [...] more specifically, the set of semiotic associations prompted by the location which impact upon the audience’s meaning-making process during the performance’ (2009: 203). While Gaby’s and Purcell’s are only casual asides made in the context of larger arguments around Shakespeare, place, and site-specificity, their offhand inclusion of ‘atmosphere’ in relation to reception and outdoor Shakespeares points to something more worthy of pause.

The range of audience responses I encountered referencing atmosphere, apparently prompted by the experience of being outdoors, began to evidence that irrespective of how audience members were using the term, what they meant by atmosphere was not simply reducible to ‘semiotic associations’ (Purcell 2009: 203). Sometimes audience members referred to atmosphere in terms of the experience of being outdoors in and of itself, ‘Being outside always adds to the atmosphere, doesn't it?’ (6 July 2014 S). Sometimes they set the present performance in opposition to indoor theatre, ‘It's just nice like being outside. It gives

it an atmosphere that you can't really get in a theatre' (2 July 2014 M). Sometimes they referred to the informality of the outdoor environment, 'I like to come when the weather is nice. I think it's just more casual, more informal. It's a lovely atmosphere' (18 June 2014 TFT). Sometimes they referred to Shakespeare, 'The atmosphere of the outdoor theatre lends itself very well to Shakespeare because of the...oh, because of the sort of bucolic themes he explores' (25 May 2013 WG). Sometimes they referred to the sociability of being outdoors with others, 'I felt it was very atmospheric and the atmosphere of not only the actors but also the audience was very good' (18 June 2014 TFT). Sometimes they referred to aesthetics, 'There was a beautiful atmospheric echo that happened when the actors were really getting into it' (18 June 2014 TFT). Lastly, simply, sometimes they referred to atmosphere without any context at all, 'It was the atmosphere. It was the atmosphere!' (6 July 2014 S).

It is necessary to admit at this point that one of my own interview questions included the word 'atmosphere' and that I too—also naively—entered the field without a clear idea of what I meant by the term, asking, 'How would you describe the atmosphere in the audience?' What was especially interesting in the responses, though, was that with a few exceptions most audience members spoke about atmosphere *before* this question was actually asked. In fact, and as several audience members pointed out, the 'atmosphere' question often felt redundant when asked in sequence, as many had already spoken at length on the subject.

Having identified 'atmosphere' as a theme running throughout the audience responses across the range of performance spaces and contexts, I turned to discussions around 'atmosphere' in phenomenology (Böhme 1993), anthropology (Ingold 2011), and human geography (Anderson 2009; McCormack 2013) to see how they might speak to the ethnography and whether and how the ethnography might speak back to the theory. The dual meaning of 'atmosphere' in common usage currently given by the Oxford Dictionary—and therefore a useful starting point in the context of audience research—is first, 'the envelope of gases surrounding the earth or another planet', and second, 'the pervading tone or mood of a place, situation, or creative work' ('Atmosphere' ODO 2014). What can be seen as energized scholarly interest in atmosphere as an aesthetic concept coincides with a re-attending to the first given meaning—that of the air surrounding the earth—in ecocritical contexts, and notably in response to growing concerns around air pollution. 'Remembering the air' as the medium upon which all life is reliant and within which we are always already immersed is one of the repeated tenets of David Abram's work (1996: 225; 2010: 99; 2014: 301-314). Space is not just not empty, Abram reminds us. Space is filled with much more than with swirling social processes. Closer to home, in the context of Shakespeare studies, Bruce R. Smith writes on air and atmosphere affecting the transmission

of sound at the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe (in Karim-Cooper and Stern 2013: 171-194). By and large, however, audience members at the outdoor Shakespeares I looked at tended to be speaking about atmosphere in ways that aligned with the second definition—that referring to 'tone or mood'—when they responded to the performances. Although, when they suggested that being at Shakespeare outdoors was preferable to being in a 'stuffy' auditorium, they might be seen as rejecting both the perceived metaphorical oppression and the literal airlessness of an enclosed theatre building.

For Gernot Böhme, one of the instigators of critical interest in atmosphere in phenomenology, aesthetics, and ecology, the 'vague use of the expression atmosphere in aesthetic and political discourse derives from a use in everyday speech which is in many respects much more exact' (1993: 113). Böhme sees atmospheres not as independent or 'free floating' (122) but as 'something that proceeds from and is created by things, persons or their constellations' (122). He argues that:

atmospheres are neither something objective, that is, qualities possessed by things, and yet they are something thinglike, belonging to the thing in that things articulate their presence through qualities—conceived as ecstasies. Nor are atmospheres something subjective, for example, determinations of a psychic state. And yet they are subjectlike, belong to subjects in that they are sensed in bodily presence by human beings and this sensing is at the same time a bodily state of being of subjects in space. (1993: 122)

Böhme's atmospheres are irreducible to sign-systems or to measurable assemblages of 'things'. They do, nevertheless, emanate from groupings of 'things' and 'persons' and are sensible by the human body. Irrespective of where they were, the audience members consulted as part of this research spoke about 'things' in relation to atmosphere. They spoke about birds as well as wildlife more broadly, and they spoke about light, darkness, weather, and landscape—all of the subjects of Williams's romantic 'green language' (1985: 133)—in and around their speaking of the 'atmosphere' of the theatrical events. The suggestion seemed to be that atmospheres proceeded from and moved in-between persons and these 'things'. Böhme's atmosphere therefore provides a way of thinking about wildlife, light and darkness, weather, and landscape as active contributors to the atmospheres of which audience members spoke.

Furthermore, in order to move between persons and things, atmospheres must also be 'of', as well as 'in' air, which returns to the idea of atmosphere in the first sense given by the ODO. The wildlife, light and darkness, and weather to which audience members referred were all *of* atmosphere in the first sense of the term, as well as contributors to the 'mood and

tone' of the events. It is here that Tim Ingold's work on atmospheres—which references Böhme's work—might, I suggest, assist with conflating the two meanings in the context of the audience ethnography. For Ingold, an atmosphere is an 'all-enveloping experience of sound, light and feeling' (2011: 134). Being in atmosphere, Ingold writes, means being 'immersed in the fluxes of the medium, the body is enlightened, ensounded and enraptured' (135). The audible, the visible, and the tangible were interwoven in the audience responses to the performances. The atmospheres of which they spoke might therefore be conceived of as emanating from 'constellations' of 'things' (Böhme 1993: 122), but they were always sensed by audience members from within 'the fluxes of the medium' (Ingold 2011: 135), within air.

What follows attends to the theme of 'atmosphere' as it might be gleaned from references to birds, animals, light and darkness circulating within audience responses to the range of outdoor Shakespeares I attended. Chasing the pigeon off the stage and back out through the wooden O, the next sections look at audience references to wildlife and then to light and darkness, bracketing discussions of weather and landscape until Chapter Four, and considering how the outdoor conditions of the performances generated responses to atmospheres that might be perceived as emanating from but not reducible to their audible, visible, and tangible objectlike/subjectlike qualities. 'Perhaps', ventures geographer Ben Anderson, 'the use of atmosphere in everyday speech and aesthetic discourse provides the best approximation of the concept of affect' (2009: 78). I finish by making a case for how Anderson's 'affective atmospheres' (2009) offers a reading of the audience responses that reinforces this thesis's principal argument for thinking about audience responses to outdoor Shakespeares as entirely contingent upon their (also culturally contingent) outdoor contexts.

Atmosphere, birds and wildlife

Birds, basking sharks, dolphins, squirrels, sheep, and horses all featured as part of the audience conversations, varying from specific sightings or soundings of named species to more generalized references to birdsong. Given that many of the performances happened at dusk, birdsong was audible in the background of many of the interview recordings and is sadly lost in transcription. The actual birds singing on each recording obviously varied from place to place—seabirds screeched at Minack, swallows and blackbirds were audible in the Willow Globe recordings, and quacking ducks, cooing pigeons, and twittery garden birds were audible at many of the park locations—although audience members tended to speak of birdsong generically. Jess, for instance, at *As You Like It* at Cyfarthfa Castle responded, 'There was times when the birds just worked with it as well – you know, the sound of the birds I enjoyed' (14 June 2014 TFC). Mark enjoyed both the organic and the manufactured

extra-theatrical sounds of the Willow Globe, saying, 'I actually enjoyed the ambient background sounds of the birds and there was a bit of traffic. There was a horse' (25 May 2013 WG). Rachel at *Dream* at Ripley Castle referred to birdsong as well as to the wind, saying, 'The birds are singing and the wind is blowing' (6 July 2014 S), and Simon, at the Willow Globe's *All's Well That Ends Well* spoke of birdsong alongside references to wind too, explaining, 'It's so friendly and it's so magical with all the birdsong. When you hear an evening performance here and you get the birdsong particularly and the rustle of the wind in the trees and the willow. We won't mention the midges' (26 May 2013 WG). The sounds referenced in these examples emanated from birds, traffic, horses, and wind, collectively contributing to an 'all-enveloping experience of sound' (Ingold 2011: 134), which contributed to the atmosphere of the outer frames of the theatrical events. Rachel and Simon's remarks referenced birdsong alongside air and wind, suggesting that as well as noting an ambient soundscape, they were also aware of the medium through which the sounds were transmitted, bringing together both social and gaseous understandings of atmosphere in a rather more exact use of a vague expression.

Most sightings of wildlife were not recounted as comments on the performances—in the same way that Woods's determined and determining aleatoric effects at Shakespeare's Globe were—but as co-inhabitants of temporarily shared outdoor spaces, spaces in which the human audiences and performers were usually the most transient inhabitants. Unlikely to swoop for prey within the enclosure of the Willow Globe, the chance of a red kite landing on stage like the anecdotal pigeons of Shakespeare's Globe was virtually nil and there was no sense of an actor contingency for incorporating them into their performances. When asked about his experience of *All's Well That Ends Well*, however, Matt responded, 'I loved watching a kite fly over. [Laughter] And then seeing how many other people noticed. I don't think they did. It was quite spectacular' (26 May 2013 WG). For Matt, the sighting of the kite was live, impressive, and personal, separate from his experience of the play. Kaz at Heartbreak's *Romeo and Juliet* at Cucking-Stool Mead laughed as he referred to the sounds that accompanied the performance, saying, 'We had...oh...sheep. Baa! All the way through the performance. Loud as you can, like screaming' (22 August 2013 HBM). For Gwyn at Cyfarthfa Castle, birdsong was both a part of and separate from her experience of the performance of *As You Like It*. She explained:

Outdoors I think you've just got that extra dimension of, you know, the birds were singing in the background, which you wouldn't have got like if you were watching this in a theatre. Which although at first can be a bit distracting but you do sort of tune it out but it's just there. (14 June 2014 TFC)

Gwyn's suggestion was that the birdsong was something she tried to 'tune out' in order to 'tune in' to the performance. The birdsong was a distraction—but it was still there, circulating, part of the atmosphere, happening at the same time as the play. As Böhme suggests, 'things articulate their presence through qualities' (1993: 122), and while the atmosphere of which audience members spoke was more than the sounds and the wildlife they came from, it might be seen as proceeding at least in part from them.

Ethnographer Colin Jerolmack—coincidentally writing on pigeons—proposes that encounters between people and wildlife are inherently social and not 'tied to an innate desire to commune with nature' (2013: 17). Supporting Jerolmack's argument, Joe, Mike, and Conor discussed a flock of geese that had flown over the stage in V formation just before the interval of a performance of *Antony and Cleopatra* at Minack, indicating the social nature of their shared experience of wildlife:

Mike: Your eye does get taken away by seabirds or whatever and then you look down and you realise you're here to look at that. [*looks down at the stage*]

Joe: Yeah. We had a noisy flock of geese going over and it was like 'Oh, watch the geese for twenty seconds!'

Conor: Yeah, I saw the geese.

Joe: And it's like, 'Oh, we'll spend twenty seconds with the geese rather than what's going on.'

Conor: Actually I nearly missed them because of my own peaked cap. And then suddenly I looked up and I thought, 'Oh!' [*laughter from all*] (6 June 2013 M)

Mike and Joe were distracted by the geese but nonetheless took the time to enjoy the interruption before returning to the play. The geese took Conor by surprise. His peaked cap nearly blocked them out, but they became a talking point for the group; a memory shared during the interval, a merging of social and airy atmospheres.

Wildlife also featured in memories of atmospheres at previous outdoor Shakespeares. A couple on holidays from Hampshire were returning to Minack having visited some years earlier and our conversation turned to a significant sighting of a basking shark they remembered:

Dan: Well, I think the last time it was cold and wet?

Hazel: Yeah. It might have been...yeah...and then the sun came out and everyone took everything off again.

Dan: I can't actually remember which Shakespeare it was. But, eh, you know, it's always a great event. And the location...

Hazel: And [*pause for suspense*]...there was a basking shark.

Evelyn: Oh wow!

Dan: Yeah.

Hazel: And it was massive. The performance is still going on and everyone went 'ah' when we see this basking shark and... brilliant. I mean, it's, you know... but no, it was brilliant. Even though it rained for a while nothing stopped. Did it?

Dan: A basking shark going behind the stage. (7 June 2013 M)

Dan and Hazel did not remember which play they had seen, although Dan had previously indicated that they were generally happy to see any Shakespeare. The basking shark was prominent in their shared memory, however, suggesting that the wildlife had, on this occasion, been more memorable than the life represented on stage. The location of the basking shark alongside the embodied memory of weather—readable in the putting on and taking off of raincoats—is an idea to which Chapter Four returns, but it is worth noticing the interrelatedness of weather and wildlife here too, pointing to both vaporous and social atmospheres, emanating from 'things, persons or their constellations' (Böhme 1993: 122) and remembered together as part of the theatrical event.

Occasionally, memories of wildlife at prior performances veered close to the strutting, fretting pigeon at Shakespeare's Globe. Ben, for instance, recollected a performance of *Hamlet* he had seen at the Willow Globe, saying:

My favourite memory was seeing our Hamlet doing his 'To be or not to be' speech with a pair of blackbirds duelling across the willows really loud. So there's him doing this really... this really dark and difficult sort of angst ridden speech and these perfect blackbirds right over the audience's head. Really brilliant atmosphere. (26 May 2013 WG)

More so than the others cited above, Ben's comments recalled *Macbeth's* pigeon, insofar as his memory was linked to a well-known speech in *Hamlet* and to simultaneous real-life bird-life. Ben's blackbirds differed from the aleatoric pigeon at Shakespeare's Globe, though, in that Ben neither suggested that the blackbirds were commenting on the Shakespeare nor that Shakespeare was commenting on the blackbirds particularly. His recollection was of separate incidents occurring at the same time rather than of assigning the blackbirds any special meaning in the context of the play. He enjoyed the nature/culture clash in the counterpoint of blackbirds/ *Hamlet*, a clash he appeared to find suggestive of the in-between, of

simultaneous auditory ‘tracks’ experienced together from within a particular atmosphere. The blackbirds retained their ‘blackbirdness’ in Ben’s memory of the play.

Laura Levin proposes thinking ‘ecologically’ about the relationship between the environment and site-specific performance, referring to those ‘unrehearsed moments [...] when the ephemera of daily life cannot help but collide with the planned event’ (2009: 250). Challenging the anthropocentrism of the environmental theatre of the 1960s and 1970s, Levin explains that in Arnold Aronson’s environmental theatre, ‘the birds chirping in Shakespeare-in-the-Park have little to do with its environmental status’ (246). Instead, she argues that site-specific performance ‘ultimately allows multiple worlds to communicate in their own material languages’, which might be understood as ‘an ecological network, a meeting place for humans, nonhumans, and actors of disparate social experiences’ (246). Intrusions from the everyday in site-specific performance, Levin writes, serve as a reminder ‘that we are not the originators of the world’s speech’ (251). To return to Ben’s blackbird/*Hamlet* example for a moment, and at the risk of stating the obvious, Ben’s blackbirds spoke blackbird, Hamlet spoke Shakespeare, and Ben experienced them both. Ben was reminded that the world’s speech did not start with him, nor with the actors speaking Shakespeare, nor even with one of Shakespeare’s most famous soliloquys. Levin concludes, however, that such a collision between performance and ‘real’ world, ‘due to the exigencies and limitations of the human language, exceeds the spectator’s ability to fully grasp it’ (255). What Levin terms ‘ungraspable’ might be articulated as atmosphere.

Crucially, Levin points out that even in unrehearsed collisions between performance and environment there is no unmediated access to any kind of truth, maintaining that ‘our perception of environment is filtered through language, ideology and memory’ (2009: 248). Even Abram, ever-committed to a retrieval of a lost human/ nature kinship concedes that ‘there can be no complete abolishment of mediation, no pure and unadulterated access to the real’ (2010: 264). The phenomenological experience of atmosphere—such as Böhme and Ingold aim for, and such as I am reading in the audience responses—was never entirely independent of the cultural conditions of the performances and the wider theatrical events. These cultural filters recall the ways that audience members spoke about the red kites and ‘Shakespeare’s day’ at the Willow Globe in Chapter One. In all of the above examples, wildlife entered the playing space—either audibly or physically—without the actors incorporating it into the action. The interruptions were ‘circumstantial’ as Woods suggests (2012: 251) and communicated in nonhuman languages (Levin 2009: 246). If the audience members’ references to wildlife were not-quite-aleatoric effects in the way that Woods

conceives of the term, they can certainly be understood as contributing to an atmosphere, both ecologically and socially constructed.

The references to wildlife that I have looked at so far here emphasized but were not limited to the audible, particularly to the sounds of birdsong that accompanied many of the performances. Many of these also overlapped with references to light and darkness, with references to what was visible as much as what was audible in the space. Anne, for instance, at Heartbreak's *Romeo and Juliet* in the walled gardens of Greenway, Devon, was a case in point, referencing birdsong and dusk in the same breath, saying, 'It's nice because you've got the light and you've got the birds singing. You've got the birds and the surroundings of the garden make it as well, don't they?' (15 July 2013 HBG). Ingold, whose concept of atmosphere is presented along with an objection to the idea of an independent 'soundscape', asks, 'Are we not bathed in the fluxes of light just as much as we are in those of sounds?' (2011: 128). It is to light and darkness that the next section turns, asking how light and darkness contributed to the perceptions of atmosphere in the audience responses to these outdoor Shakespeares.

Light and darkness

The Elizabethan wrote us verses
About a heath at evening
Which no electrician can match, nor even
The heath itself.

(Brecht in Palmer 2013: 133)

Scott Palmer, writing on the phenomenology of stage lighting, uses Bertolt Brecht's poem, from which the lines above are taken, to indicate that practitioner's disdain for apparently misguided attempts to enhance Shakespeare's poetry with elaborate electric lighting (2013: 133). While not challenging Brecht's suggestion that poetry is diminished by attempts to actualise it, nor that complementary stage lighting is superfluous in a reconstructed Elizabethan performance, the audience responses to light and darkness at contemporary outdoor Shakespeares do challenge the implication that the natural light of the world outside somehow fails to live up to the way a poet like Shakespeare wrote about it, that Shakespeare 'out-heaths' the heath itself. The ever-changing and uncontrollable light in the skies, illuminating landscapes at a particular time of year, contributed to the atmosphere audience members spoke of at the theatrical events. If Shakespeare was upstaged by a striking sunset, and the sunset was noticed and remarked upon, whether or not it complemented the

action of the play, what did this say about the role of Shakespeare at outdoor Shakespeares and what did it say about the natural light on the heath? One kind of ecocritical reading might seek to rescue the heath from the early modern canon and restore it to itself, outside.

Even more so than in their references to wildlife, audience responses to light and darkness were bound up with ideas of historical and cultural practices, framed within and filtered through 'language, ideology and memory' (Levin 2009: 248). A short historical trajectory of thinking about light and darkness in relation to outdoor Shakespeares briefly provides some context for these tensions as they were articulated in the audience responses that follow. Written nearly a century ago, Sheldon Cheney's *The Open-Air Theatre* (1918) indicates that arguments around light, darkness, and Shakespeare outdoors have been circulating for quite some time. Cheney explains:

It has been hotly debated whether the open-air theatre should be utilized only in the daytime, or at night with artificial lighting. There can be no doubt that lighting effects entail the loss of a certain amount of the naturalness that is one of the outdoor drama's most pleasing qualities, and that they smack strongly of the hackneyed elements of indoor staging. On the other hand there is a compensating gain in the richness of colour and decorative play of light and shade that cannot be achieved in daylight. (1918: 125)

This is as much as Cheney has to say on the subject of light. But, while conflicted about whether daylight or night-time is aesthetically preferable, Cheney notes that the qualities of natural light and darkness contribute to the atmosphere of the performances. He observes how colour, light, and shade at night-time possess qualities not replicable in daylight nor in artificially darkened indoor theatres: the heath is home to an atmosphere independent of language. In some respects, Cheney's writing actually anticipates the concerns of the nonhuman turn more than recent writing on light and contemporary productions of early modern performance does. He also hits on one of the tensions running throughout this thesis—the ways in which history rubs up against contemporary atmospheric experiences, producing complex and multi-layered responses to performance and to nature. Cheney seems unconcerned about whether or not the light outdoors has precedents in original practices, or how closely it replicates early modern theatre conventions. Could this be, perhaps, the 'hot debate' to which Cheney alludes, referring to practitioners at the turn of the century bent on 'authentic' reconstructions of Shakespeare's plays, whose work would have been fundamentally at odds with the landscaped outdoor Shakespeares favoured by Ben Greet?

The light at evening performances in 2013 and 2014 was an obvious contrast to the daylight matinees that would have been the norm for Shakespeare's Elizabethan theatre. As Alan Dessen explains, early modern performances signalled time through spoken references to light and darkness in broad daylight:

[A]n Elizabethan dramatic company would have used dialogue, torches, nightgowns, groping in the dark, and failures in seeing—all presented in full light—to establish the illusion of darkness for a viewer who, presumably, would infer night from such signals and stage behaviour. (1984: 75)

Joe Falocco, whose research concerns twentieth-century reconstructions of early modern practices, considers natural light at contemporary outdoor Shakespeare Festivals in the U.S.A., arguing that proximity to early modern practices would be better achieved by starting performances earlier in the day. Falocco writes:

The glow of sunset on the face of young lovers at the conclusion of a romantic comedy, or the gathering gloom in the fifth act of a tragedy played at twilight, are effects not easily reproduced by the most elaborate stage technology. Universal lighting in such conditions means coordinating show times to coincide with daylight. [...] By beginning their performances an hour earlier, such companies could save a huge production expense while simultaneously experiencing the benefits of universal lighting. (2010: 175)

Neglecting for a moment the need for start-times to coincide with when people are actually free to go to the theatre (weekends perhaps excepted), what Falocco has to say about stage lighting runs into a conflict between desires around historical reconstructions and contemporary atmospheric experiences. The same tension can be found in recent writing on contemporary immersive theatre practices too—touching on similar concerns from another perspective—which returns to the idea of Shakespeare and outdoor theatre. In an interview with Josephine Machon, practitioner Bill Mitchell describes theatre company Wildworks's creative processes, referring to natural light and Shakespeare in the context of outdoor performance. Mitchell explains, 'When we started working outside you've got riches, the whole sky to play with, a whole beach to play with, light—a very old thing. Shakespeare wrote his plays around the fading of the light—so did we' (2013: 249). Shakespeare is not mentioned again in Mitchell's interview, which otherwise concerns immersive performances outdoors, and it is unclear exactly what he means about a lineage that can be traced back to Shakespeare and fading light (although his comments echo Falocco's observations of the aesthetic potentialities of late-afternoon light outdoors, cited above). Yet again, Shakespeare appears as a benchmark against whose 'original' practices contemporary outdoor performance is assessed. Mitchell's comments suggest an atmospheric experience derived from natural light

outdoors in contemporary immersive performance more than they suggest any real desire to recreate the conditions for which Shakespeare was writing.

For the most part, the performances at which I am looking took place in neither the daylight conditions of the first early modern matinees nor utilized the kinds of technology available at indoor theatres. The natural light accompanying evening performances passed from daylight through dusk to darkness and this progression altered with the changing weather and the summer months. Heartbreak Productions toured with a few sets of 'builders-yard' lights, which were switched on at the interval, focusing the stage area as the audience was gradually enveloped by darkness. This also meant that the availability of electric power points often determined where Heartbreak's performances took place at a given venue, as much as aesthetic preferences. With the exception of the Willow Globe, where early modern practices were pursued, shared lighting and matinee performances embraced, the audience members consulted as part of this research did not consider shared daylight to be a 'benefit' at all. Despite Shakespeare's plays being written for daylight conditions, the performances were overwhelmingly perceived as ineffective in daylight. Matinee audiences repeatedly indicated that something was lacking from the daylight performances. Sam, for instance, felt that dusk would have better suited *Romeo and Juliet* than the bright sunshine of a matinee:

And this was obviously in the middle of the day, but some plays...if they're early evening...they would be even better because quite a lot of the scenes were happening at night or early morning. So if you've got that light where it's not quite dark...you know...somehow it's more... a bit...it brings it...it brings it to you a bit more, doesn't it? The atmosphere. (6 July 2013 HBB)

Even at Minack where some stage lighting was rigged, it only became usable towards the later parts of the performance, as daylight faded into night. Adrian, at a matinee of *Antony and Cleopatra* maintained that Shakespeare simply did not work in the daytime. It was too difficult to concentrate on Shakespeare in daylight because there was so much else going on, 'In the evening when it gets dark it works, but not in the afternoon. I mean the environment takes over. The actors have a very difficult job' (7 June 2013 M). Conversely, daylight was an important part of the atmosphere Mike sought from the performance experience at Minack. He explained, 'I think it has to be...To get the most out of being here, it's got to be a warm summer's evening. It wouldn't work in the dark because of the environment around you as well' (6 June 2013 M).

Evening performances at Minack start at 8pm, a relatively late start for outdoor Shakespeares in the U.K.. Minack's theatre manager, Phil Jackson, explained the start time as both an aesthetic preference and a socio-economic necessity (Minack is a considerable drive

from its nearest working Cornish towns and an 8pm start allows locals time to travel to the theatre after work). More than the practical considerations, Jackson insisted that darkness was crucial for creating the desired atmosphere at this theatre and saw the electric lighting at Minack as contributing to this atmosphere:

At eight o' clock you get more atmosphere. Lighting comes in. If you did it at seven-thirty in the summer, in the first half of the season you could forget theatre lights. You wouldn't need them so you wouldn't get the atmosphere. So at eight o' clock... the lights...by the second half the lights are kicking in even early in the season and it creates the atmosphere that the Minack generates. We've thought about seven-thirty. It used to be eight-thirty years ago. We've brought it back to eight—I don't know how many years ago—twenty years ago now. But again that was for atmosphere. (13 September 2013)

Even from its inception, the founders of Minack sought to work with the onset of darkness using improvised electric lights. The souvenir brochure available in the gift-shop reads, 'The first performance of 'The Tempest' in the summer of 1932 was lit by batteries, car headlights and the feeble power brought down from Minack House. Then as the moon shone across the bay, the magic that is The Minack Theatre touched its first audience' (n.d.: 6). The brochure's rhetoric of 'moonlight and magic', compounded by Jackson's comments, indicate that it is still an atmospheric outdoor experience of Shakespeare that Minack seeks to accommodate today. The disappointment that audience member, Jennie, felt at a matinee of Moving Stories's *The Tempest* seemed to corroborate Jackson's points:

I thought it might be a bit better at night because if you're in a theatre situation and it's dark, it's a bit like watching TV and actually, you can be there more with it because here if you see a noise you look around or you see a boat, you're more here aren't you? And then you're aware, you're quite aware a lot of the time that you're just watching the play rather than getting completely into it. (3 July 2014 M)

Some awareness of the historical origins of daylight performance occasionally explained away a perceived absence of the desired atmosphere. Jack, at another matinee, explained, 'I did think it was slightly hot out. But the Globe is an outdoor venue isn't it and that's a bit more enclosed than this and it was intended for the outdoor performance, wasn't it? Without lights and all things like that' (6 July 2013 HBB). It was initially unclear as to whether Jack was referring to the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe or to the Globe in its original early modern context. As he continued to speak, though, thoughts of the original performance context led him to thoughts of the natural light for which the plays were intended. He had gone outside to see Shakespeare but desired a particular version of the 'real' heath rather than a spoken version. A milder dusk would have been preferable, but Jack reconciled himself to hot daylight by rationalizing that these were the conditions under which the original performances

would have taken place. Quasi-historical authenticity partially compensated for the disappointment of a performance that did not quite work on a bright afternoon in Bristol in 2013.

While the desire for a dark and atmospheric experience of Shakespeare in the evening tended to be verified by audience members across the whole range of performances I looked at, there were occasional anomalies that are worth pointing out too, as they gesture towards some of the discussions around the importance of shared lighting and the early modern theatre. Martin, for instance, felt that the performance's equally lit first half facilitated a democratic actor/ audience relationship, 'particularly in this first half because the lights haven't come on yet, the lighting's equal [...] We're all illuminated the same, so, in a certain way, there's a sort of equality to us and the performers. (6 July 2013 HBB). What Martin inferred, if he didn't quite go on to say it, was that the shared experience of the first part of the performance shifted to a personal experience as the audience was immersed in darkness.

What might also be added to the above discussions around light, darkness, and outdoor Shakespeares is the transition between light and darkness that accompanied evening performances outdoors. What happens when actors and audience share daylight for the first half of the performance but are in natural darkness by the play's conclusion? Hattie, at an evening performance, said 'I like it also when it starts to get dark and it becomes more, sort of, atmospheric somehow' (13 September 2013 M). Phoebe also reflected on the onset of darkness, observing the transition from light to darkness and suggesting that her focus narrowed as the evening progressed. Working through her thoughts, she explained:

As the sun goes down... I don't know... the focus changes. Because of the way it's set with all the different entrances, you... I don't know... it's quite big, but because of the lights and it getting darker... I don't know... and by the end it's just the two of them in the middle on the stage and that's all you can really see. And the focus shifts. (6 July 2013 HBB)

Phoebe's experience shifted from sharing daylight with the performers and with other audience members to feeling more separated from the play. As darkness set in, the action of the play was increasingly privileged and the audiences were literally separated from the performers by what Palmer refers to as 'a fourth wall' of stage lighting (2013: 13). Frances, at another evening performance, said, 'And everyone is engrossed in it as well. Everyone is...it's got their imagination and everything I think. Especially now it's dark' (22 August 2013 HBM). In the shift towards isolation amid a crowd, this gradually solitary experience reported by some audience members recalled Gaston Bachelard's dream of a hermit's hut (1994). Bachelard describes the poet Rilke, walking with friends and seeing a light flickering in a far-

off hut. Despite walking with others, with friends, Rilke suddenly feels alone. For Bachelard, ‘This image of solitude symbolized by a single light moves the poet’s heart in so personal a way that it isolates him [sic] from his companions’ (36). He wonders ‘When we are lost in darkness and see a distant glimmer of light, who does not dream of a thatched cottage or, to go more deeply still into legend, of a hermit’s hut?’ (31).

The audience experiences of atmospheric darkness obviously differed from the imaginary isolation of the dweller in Bachelard’s hut, given that the visible space of the play presented a world of activity and that not of a solitary dweller. But when all the rest of the world was night and darkness and the only light was coming from the dreamlike space of the play, audience members appeared to feel more and more separate from one another in the darkness amid the crowd. Kim, for instance, responded to an evening performance, saying, ‘I was totally absorbed in it. More and more as it got darker actually’ (6 July 2013 HBB). In darkness outdoors, the world of the play became a lighted bubble into which audiences could peer: more like peering into a toy snow-globe from the outside than sharing the light of a Globe like Shakespeare’s. Sara Maitland, whose work on forests and fairy tales I drew on in the previous chapter, observes that ‘many fairy stories begin with the protagonists spending a night in a tree in a forest and seeing from that height a ‘small light’ far off through the woods which they then follow to find their adventure and destiny’ (2012: 123). The experience of darkness about which audience members spoke prompts a return to this idea of a fairy tale within the oral tradition—to the idea of a story told around the light of a fire, the light far off in the woods. In setting up what he means by a visible, audible, and felt atmosphere, Ingold proposes that ‘light is fundamentally an experience of being *in* the world that is ontologically prior to the sight of things. Though we do not see light, we do see *in* light’ (2011: 96 [original emphasis]). Light and darkness were part of the atmospheres of which audience members spoke at these performances, but in the feeling of being separated from the performance progressively, looking into the light, it might be possible to argue that audience members *did* see light—or certainly things lit—from their chairs and blankets in the darkness.

If an outdoor Shakespeare starts in shared daylight but ends in darkness, does this mean that the practice comes full circle only to end up back in the same darkened auditorium that decades of progressive environmental and site-based practitioners have worked so hard to oppose? Although the latter part of a performance tended to be privileged by the artificial lighting, nighttime immersed the audience in a way that was different to the darkness of an indoor theatre. Sitting on damp, dewy—and, on one occasion, frosty—ground in the darkness of night was a physically different experience to occupying a seat in a darkened

indoor theatre. Nighttime, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty puts forward, is a different kind of dark to artificial darkness, 'The night is not an object in front of me; rather, it envelops me, it penetrates me through all of my senses, it suffocates my memories, and it all but effaces my personal identity' (2012: 296). In the darkness of night, the audience, invisible to the actors, remained aware of the dropping temperature, their individual identities all but effaced and coats and blankets pulled tighter as it got colder. Joe explained:

You're kind of constantly fighting the cold. I think most times you come it's [...] You're thinking about which layers you've got to get on so there's that preoccupation when you're watching. It's about how can I be as warm as I can when I'm watching it and can I be any warmer if I need to be when the time comes. (6 June 2013 M)

Some aspects of the darkened auditorium remained part of this experience, particularly the sense of increased focus on the stage area, but the dropping temperature, the constant movement of air currents, and shifting shadows, meant that audiences retained the sensory experience of feeling immersed in the outdoor atmosphere, an atmosphere that encompassed both the aesthetic experience and the weather, the air, in the nighttime where they gathered.

On natural light and Shakespeare, Dessen remains rigid in his quest for original practices, warning that 'To ignore the conventional or metaphoric basis of Elizabethan night and darkness is to flirt with the danger of transforming Shakespeare's metaphors, scenes, and effects into an experience acceptable to audiences today but greatly diminished from their full potential' (1984: 83). But, collectively, what the audience responses to light and darkness seemed to say was that outdoor darkness, that night, was not just 'acceptable' but that it formed a significant part of the appeal and the affective experience of these outdoor Shakespeares, whether or not the plays were subsequently performed to their 'full potential' in this setting. The atmosphere outdoors, which altered with the progression through daylight, dusk, and darkness, while sometimes conflicting with the action of the play and sometimes complementing it, always reinforced a sense of being in a particular kind of atmosphere outdoors, sensed through light, sound, and feeling (Ingold 2011: 134). If the sunset was sometimes more spectacular than the play, if the stars shone for Romeo to defy or if he defied them in broad daylight, the real heath usually out-heathed the discursive one. Audiences sought and preferred atmospheric rather than historical experiences.

Affective atmospheres

As I work through references to wildlife and to natural light and darkness, the difficulty of talking about one stimulus alone becomes apparent. Audience members often referred to more than one aspect of what was going on in comments that suggested a

heightened multi-sensory experience of atmosphere. Noelle, for instance, responded to a performance of *After The Tempest*, saying, ‘And being in the natural environment as well is part of it I think. You know because things happen, like, you know, the wind blows or the sun comes out or a helicopter goes over and the actors respond to that which was really good’ (18 July 2013 TVB). This is where some recent ideas around ‘affect’ offer a way of bringing together the audience references to atmosphere, co-created by, proceeding from but not reducible to the ‘things, persons or their constellations’ (Böhme 1993: 122) from which they proceeded.

While there are many different understandings of affect and many ways in which the term has been understood (Anderson 2009; Berlant 2011; Gregg and Seigworth 2010; McCormack 2013; Thrift 2008), the following definitions from cultural geography are illuminating in my context. For Derek McCormack, ‘Affective qualities are those heterogeneous matters of the sensible world we often try and capture through terms such as emotion, mood, and feeling’ (2013: 3). McCormack’s affect is ‘a distributed and diffuse field of intensities, circulating within but also moving beyond and around bodies’ (3). Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison describe affect as ‘the aleatory dynamics of experience, the ‘push’ of life which interrupts, unsettles and haunts persons, places or things’ (2010: 16), and it is particularly next to Anderson’s ideas on ‘affective atmospheres’ (2009) that I would like to position the audience responses in this chapter.

Anderson, who builds on phenomenologist Mikel Dufrenne’s, as well as on Böhme’s work on atmospheres, ventures that ‘by holding onto the ambiguities that surround the term atmosphere [we might] learn to attend to collective affects’ (78). What Anderson terms ‘affective atmospheres’, ‘are not reducible to the individual bodies that they emerge from’ (80), and he goes on to argue that attending to affective atmospheres might assist us ‘to learn to be affected by the ambiguities of affect/ emotion, by that which is determinate and indeterminate, present and absent, singular and vague’ (80). Already, it is not hard to see how the wildlife, light and darkness that audience members referenced in this chapter might be understood together as ‘affective’, moving within and around multiple bodies, interrupting and unsettling, irreducible to singular sources but generative of manifold responses. Relating the play to the environment, for instance, Naomi linked some of the play’s language to the sounds of wildlife and to the changing light at a performance of *All’s Well That Ends Well*.

When they talked about skies and heaven, I looked upwards and thought it was very evocative. Yes. So that related to the sounds to the surroundings and the sounds of lambs bleating in the background... That was very atmospheric too and as the play

was going on, the sun was going down and casting light on the stage. (25 May 2013 WG)

The play's spoken references to the heavens prompted Naomi to attend to the light and wildlife that were actually present in the space. She took in the sounds of the words in the play, the sights of the sky, the sounds of animals, and the fading evening light together, as 'collective affects' of the atmosphere (Anderson 2009: 78). The affective atmosphere Naomi described was ambiguous but not 'free-floating' and while it might be seen as emanating from persons, language, skies, sounds, and surroundings, attributable to all of them together, it was irreducible to any one of these things alone (Böhme 1993: 122).

Similarly, Joe, at a performance of *Antony and Cleopatra*, articulated a way of thinking about the play and the environment that did not privilege any one stimulus, all of which he understood as contributing to the atmosphere of the event:

I think you've got to... you've got to pay a lot of attention to what's going on down on the stage because wherever you're sitting you might miss a little bit of the action depending on the angle of where you're sitting. And, yeah, the sound sometimes with the wind and everything... the sound... the sound can be a little bit impaired. So you've got to be paying attention to that. And there's all the stuff going on around which is really interesting. You've got... you know... sort of, boats going by. You've got things happening. I sometimes watch the tide coming in and out over there. During half of a show you can see how much the tide's come in and out. So it's kind of like you've got everything going on around you with the show going on as well. So you've got to be really active in your attention if you want to pay attention to all of those things. I mean maybe I should be just concentrating on the show. But I think there's other things that I'm interested in in the environment that I want to see as well while I'm here. (6 June 2013 M)

Joe included the play as one aspect of his experience of the performance, indicating alertness and interactive attention to a continuously changing, living, and polyvocal environment. Joe expressed an explicit desire to take in the multiple stimuli and to be present in an atmosphere where all of the inhabitants—human and more-than-human—had something to say, recalling McCormack's 'distributed and diffuse field of intensities' (2013: 3). The performance, then, recollecting Levin's argument, was part of 'an ecological network', one that 'ultimately allow[ed] multiple worlds to communicate in their own material languages' (2009: 246). The world communicated in material languages that did not originate with the performance, but that were experienced simultaneously and holistically as an affective atmosphere. For Joe, the affective atmosphere incorporated what he could hear (the wind) and what he could see (the sea, the tide, the performance), pointing towards the possibility of an ecologically-attentive audience response to outdoor performance.

At the Willow Globe, Richard and I spoke about light, wind, and sounds of wildlife after a performance of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Richard: But there was certain things, like, I think when the two wives got together for the first time and they were kind of thinking about what they were going to do to Falstaff, there was a... I think it was either a dimming of the sunlight—the light went dim—and it was kind of like almost something's going on here, it's a bit darker now, I don't know, or there was some kind of change, like a bit of a breeze or something like that, you know and I thought that was interesting. But another thing was, you know, there was a little bird, or it was either a blackbird - it was some kind of blackbird anyway and it would fly in this kind of specific path every now and again.

Evelyn: I think I know what you mean.

Richard: Did you see it? It would just shoot across and that was just like a little added extra, do you know what I mean? At one point where there was a... I think it was a kestrel that was flying high - did you see that? Yeah, that was very good. (22 June 2014 WG)

Note how firstly Richard recalled a moment in the performance in terms of the natural light on the stage and how it lit the actors. He spoke about the breeze, what he saw, and what he felt. He also noticed a blackbird darting through the willow arches. Higher still, a kestrel flew over the theatre. In accordance with Ingold's atmosphere, Richard's response brought together what he saw, heard, and felt (2011: 134), irreducible to 'individual bodies' (Anderson 2009: 80) but nevertheless proceeding from them (Böhme 1993: 122) as 'collective affects' (Anderson 2009: 78) in the outdoor theatre space.

Lastly, Flo at a performance of *Antony and Cleopatra* took the idea of what it was that the atmosphere affected a little further in her response to light, wildlife, and performance, by attempting to make meaning from the experience. Like so many others, Flo noticed wildlife, light, weather, and performance, but she went on to try and describe what these stimuli prompted as a whole, without ever quite arriving at a singular 'large-scale' or 'determined' meaning (Woods 2012: 250-251):

I think the first word that comes to me is provocative. Because the play in itself has a lot of provocative... sort of... moments. And I think that the surrounding is very provocative because it really makes you come together with nature and, you know, with the sea and the sun and the seagulls. I mean it's... I don't know. There's just something really provocative about nature generally and I think the two together are really beautiful. (6 June 2013 M)

Although Flo did not quite articulate what it was the atmosphere provoked, the idea of a provocative 'beauty' seems to get at the heart of an affective atmosphere that was more than

but reliant upon the sum of its individual parts, encompassing mood, tone, and air, ‘determinate and indeterminate, present and absent, singular and vague’ (Anderson 2009: 80).

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the ways in which audience members articulated their perceptions of wildlife, light and darkness as contributing to the atmospheres of the outdoor theatrical events. Although the extra-theatrical stimuli were sometimes thought of as distractions, wildlife, light and performance fluctuated between being foregrounded and peripheral in attention, suggesting immersion in an affective atmosphere co-created by the performance of the play and the performances of these very ‘vibrant’ (Bennett 2010) material things also inhabiting the outdoor spaces. References to sights, sounds, and feelings suggested an holistic experience of atmosphere such as Ingold proposes, ‘an all-enveloping experience of sound, light and feeling’ (2011: 134). Supporting Böhme’s propositions too, the atmospheres of which audience members spoke were ‘thinglike’ but not things, ‘subjectlike’ but not tied to subjects, proceeding from but irreducible to ‘things, persons or their constellations’ (1993: 122), or to ‘individual bodies’ (Anderson 2009: 80). Wildlife, light, and darkness (and weather and landscape, which I expand upon in Chapter Four) were perceived as productively affecting audience experience in particular, peculiar cultural circumstances, perceived as operating with their own agency while simultaneously inscribed with cultural references. Audience responses referenced phenomenological and sensory experiences of atmosphere, sometimes verbalized through blurry, hazy ideas of an historical Shakespeare, authentic, or original practices, and revealing assumptions of a teleological cultural heritage readable in the present practice.

However incidental wildlife, light, and darkness were considered in relation to Shakespeare, they formed a significant part of the performances’ perceived ‘affective atmospheres’ (Anderson 2009). The subjects/ objects of Williams’s Romantic ‘green language’ (1985: 133) contributed to coproducing these affective atmospheres with the audiences and performances of the plays. If the language was a romantic cliché, the things themselves and how they were perceived were not. Collectively, the audience responses to wildlife, light, and darkness supported Abram’s suggestion that ‘If we allow that matter is *not* inert, but is rather animate (or self-organizing) from the get-go, then [...] we find ourselves not above, but in the very midst of this living field, our own sentience part and parcel of the sentient landscape (2010: 47 [original emphasis]). The specifics varied from place to place but the affective atmospheres of which audience members spoke were always and entirely contingent upon their (also contingent) outdoor circumstances. Reception across the range

of performances was dependent upon the outdoor contexts, and the atmospheres were dependent upon much more than the performances themselves.

Literary ecocritic Timothy Chandler, who draws on Böhme's atmospheres in a literary ecocritical context ventures that 'In light of anthropogenic climate change, the relationship between atmosphere in the aesthetic sense and atmosphere in the planetary sense becomes ever more important' (2011: 566). The affective atmospheres in the audience responses were limited to properties of the immediately perceptible phenomenological environments at the performance events and, despite encompassing atmosphere in the aesthetic sense and atmosphere as air, their use of the term did not extend to anything near a 'planetary' consciousness of atmosphere. But the affective nature of the atmospheres of which audience members spoke was closer to Levin's argument for site-specific performance as an 'ecological network' (2009: 246) than to the 'large-scale' meaning-making of the aleatoric effect Woods identifies with a pigeon, a play, and a human actor at Shakespeare's Globe (2012: 250-251). Things could not be subsumed into the performances because there were no boundaries between the performances and the places where they happened. Instead of necessarily interrupting or being incorporated into the performances, then, wildlife, light, and darkness shared the space as ecological co-contributors to the events' affective atmospheres. With the emphasis on performance alone, intrusions were indeed circumstantial, incidental, and secondary, but by decentring the performance, the events' affective atmospheres can be more ecologically understood as relational; everything in the outdoor spaces working simultaneously, if not together. When considering affective atmospheres in relation to outdoor performance, we might then acknowledge the generative capacities of nonhuman matter outdoors in ways that are more ecologically attentive. In this chapter, this kind of ecological attentiveness comes from listening to the felt and imaginative, affective experience of atmospheres described by audiences in more-than-human environments.

First appearing in his foundational work on nonrepresentational geographies and affect, Nigel Thrift's call for attention to 'the little, the messy and the jerry-rigged as a part of politics and not just incidental to it' (2008: 197) is now well-known and widely cited. Developing Thrift's work, Christine Berberich, Neil Campbell, and Robert Hudson introduce a special section of *Cultural Politics* Journal on 'Affective Landscapes' (2013), arguing that rather than being 'romantic and immaterial' as it has been sometimes suggested, affect is in fact 'critically dynamic and political' (314). It is tentatively towards an ecopolitics of these audience responses to outdoor Shakespeares that the next chapter moves, taking the second two of the common topics of audience conversations—weather and landscape—and interrogating more of the common themes I drew from these responses, putting them in

conversations with frameworks of 'ecophobia' (Estok 2011) and 'enchantment' (Bennett 2001).

CHAPTER FOUR: Talking about the weather/ Staring at the scenery: ecophobia and enchantment, green pleasure, and alternative hedonism

Jade: When I look at the clouds sometimes I think there must be a God.

Alex: When we had the really, really, really torrential rainstorm in...

Jade: In Newby?

Alex: In Newby, yeah. I looked up and I went, 'Do you see this oh God?' and straightaway it basically stopped. I thought, 'Fuck, maybe God's real'. I mean I don't believe in him and I went through this whole religious thing in like four seconds on stage it was really odd.

Simon: And I just thought thank fuck it's stopped raining.

(Lawson *A Summer Hamlet* 2013)

Irrespective of their very different environments, socio-cultural contexts, and the varied aesthetic achievements of the theatre companies, audience conversations across the entire range of case study performances repeatedly referred to topics of weather and landscape, as well as to the wildlife, light, and darkness discussed in Chapter Three, fulfilling all of the concerns of Raymond Williams's Romantic 'green language' (1985: 133). Although—and to reiterate the previous chapter's point—such references were usually made with a sense of being in proximity to, rather than with a romanticized sense of separation from them. This chapter builds on the discussion of 'affective atmospheres' in the previous, drawing from audience responses to weather and landscape and identifying themes of 'ecophobia' (Estok 2011) and 'enchantment' (Bennett 2001) as some of their perceived affects. What I found was that the enchantment that audience members described—apparently stimulated by the theatrical event in an outdoor space—disrupted the presence of ecophobia, thereby complicating how we might think about the ecopolitics of outdoor Shakespeares in twenty-first century Britain. I question whether and in what ways the audience responses supported Michel Serres's description of those 'living only indoors, immersed only in passing time and not out in the weather [...] indifferent to the climate, except during their vacations when they rediscover the world in a clumsy, Arcadian way [and] naively pollute what they don't know' (in Buell 2005: 70). Conversely, what—if any—ecopolitical potential might exist within the moments of affective enchantment audience members reported, given that outdoor Shakespeares have been taking place in the U.K. concurrent with the period of catastrophic anthropogenic environmental damage? Where affect refers to 'the messiness of the experiential, the unfolding of bodies into worlds and the drama of contingency, how we are touched by what we are near' (Ahmed 2010: 30),

and where these subtle shifts are always political (Thrift 2008: 197), ecophobia and enchantment might be understood politically too. The chapter ends by positioning the enchanted responses within Kate Soper's framework for an 'alternative hedonism' (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011), an emergent Williamsian structure of feeling that, Soper argues, represents a rethinking of the conditions for human prospering and flourishing in resistance to pressured neoliberal lifestyles and capitalist patterns of consumption. Throughout, the chapter furthers the thesis's primary argument for the need to think about how audiences respond to outdoor Shakespeares as more entangled with and shaped by their outdoor contexts than we have previously allowed.

Ecophobia and Enchantment

In *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia* (2011) Simon Estok introduces the concept of 'ecophobia', which he defines as:

an irrational and groundless fear or hatred of the natural world, as present and subtle in our daily lives and literature as homophobia and racism and sexism. It plays out in many spheres; it sustains the personal hygiene and cosmetics industries (which cite nature's 'flaws' and 'blemishes' as objects of their work); it supports city sanitation boards that issue fines seeking to keep out 'pests' and 'vermin' associated in municipal mentalities with long grass; it keeps beauticians and barbers in business; it is behind landscaped gardens and trimmed poodles in women's handbags on the Seoul subway system; it is about power and control; it is what makes looting and plundering of animal and nonanimal resources possible. (2011: 4)

Louisa Mackenzie and Stephanie Posthumus challenge Estok's use of 'hatred', suggesting that 'fear' alone might be a more precise way of describing the human attitude towards nature that Estok identifies (2013: 6). Timothy Clark is critical of ecophobia too, arguing that Estok makes an 'intellectual and moral oversimplification' to propose that 'arguments in defence of the nonhuman environment will always somehow support and be supported by the latest developments of a left-liberal humanist programme of ever-expanding social inclusiveness' (2015: 110), now that the idea of the Anthropocene destabilises the once-familiar ways in which we conceive of scale. Without losing sight of what Clark's criticisms might mean for this chapter's conclusions, though, ecophobia—understood primarily as 'fear' but also occasionally as 'hatred'—broadly characterizes one of the themes I identified across the audience interviews in response to weather and landscape particularly.

Ecophobia has historical precedents in writing on outdoor performance, running from the early modern period right through to relatively recent writing from even ecologically-minded performance practitioners. Gabriel Egan suggests that the early modern practice of outdoor playing had more to do with economics than it did with aesthetic

preferences or with any aspiration to connect with nature. Looking at some of the first early modern theatre companies, he points out that ‘Far from relishing their marginal status in demotic open-air amphitheatres in the suburbs, the players always wanted to play indoors to rich patrons in the city and did so whenever they could’ (2006: 47). So it was with many of the practitioners I was working with, a small number of whom actually admitted that they would have preferred to be working indoors in theatres, but that outdoor space was less costly and tended to draw an audience. This legacy continues through into how weather has been personified subsequently in writing on outdoor performance. Mary Kelly’s handbook on *How To Make a Pageant* (1941) personifies rain and wind as ‘enemies’, pitting performance and weather *against* one another in a battle for comprehension. ‘Rain and wind are always enemies’, Kelly writes, ‘rain being the worse, for even if the players brave the wetness of the rain, they cannot push their voices through it’ (66). Director L. Zimmerman warns that, in outdoor theatre, ‘vague patterns of movement and picturization may be submerged by the welter of competing stimuli’ (1974: 5 [emphasis added]). For Zimmerman, the sounds, smell, and feel of the outdoor environment are *competitors* not collaborators. Not until John Fox’s writing on Welfare State International (WSI) does wet weather appear to be embraced for its aesthetic and atmospheric potential. Weather is not only factored-into WSI’s devising processes but also considered a creative contributor. Reflecting on *Tempest on Snake Island*, Fox recalls a particular moment in performance where wet weather was perceived as a collaborator. Fox writes, ‘in thunder and lightning, three hundred spectators huddled under shiny grey umbrellas to become a living painting by Manet’, and he goes on to argue that ‘So often the weather is our best ally and offers moments of unpredictable beauty’ (2002: 40). What is interesting about this writing is that Fox does not limit the idea of weather as a collaborator to balmy, sunny days, but extends the idea of collaboration to all kinds of weather, as potential creative collaborators. His use of the term ‘ally’, however—the opposite of ‘enemy’—sustains the frame of war-like language used to refer to the weather. Mike Pearson writes about the aesthetics of wet weather and performance in his writing on *The Persians* too, reflecting that ‘With an option to withdraw exposed elements of performance back into the house, weather became a potentially active component of spectatorship: most strikingly in views riven by diagonals of heavy rain, or partly obscured by intervening moorland mist’ (in Birch and Tompkins 2012: 82).

Among the audiences I observed and the individuals interviewed, a mixture of sensible and occasionally disproportionate preparations were occasioned by the desire to watch a play outdoors. In light of Estok’s thinking, the waterproofs, sunscreen, mosquito spray, hayfever tablets, down-filled jackets, camping chairs, bin bags, hats, scarves, blankets,

and hotwaterbottles that audience members brought with them—material items designed to protect the body from extreme temperatures, moisture, pollen, insect-attack, and general discomfort—reinforced ecophobia, demonstrating human attempts to be outdoors without feeling the effects of the weather. Discourses around alternative wet-weather venues, no-refund, and show-abandonment policies potentially compounded this sense of fear. But would sunstroke acquired ‘naturally’ in the heatwave of July 2013 have perpetuated any less ecophobia than ‘unnatural’ cover ups did? Or were these pragmatic responses superseded by the conscious choice to venture outdoors to watch a play—a synthetic activity anyway—opening up space for a more complex affective ecopolitics within the ethnography?

Very far from Estok’s bleak ecophobia is some of the critical thinking and writing on enchantment, which, in the context of a climate-threatened world, has also been employed ecopolitically—by some scholars more convincingly than others. Like ‘magic’, ‘liveness’, and ‘atmosphere’, ‘enchantment’ sounds fluffy, sentimental, or spiritual, recalling romantic and Disneyfied constructions of picturesque landscapes and anthropomorphized wildlife.⁶⁰ James Gibson makes ambitious claims for reenchantment—the ‘re’ indicating a return to a nature deemed lost—describing an experience that might bring about ‘*transcendence*, a sense of mystery and meaning, glimpses of a numinous world beyond our own’ (2009: 11 [original emphasis]). What Gibson sees as a contemporary culture of reenchantment, in a North American context, is neither nostalgia for a lost Eden ‘nor simply another outburst of romanticism’, because, he argues, ‘it is fuelled by a new sense of urgency’ (10). Gibson confidently pronounces reenchantment’s ethical potential, positing that ‘spiritual connections made to animals and landscapes almost invariably lead—often intentionally, sometimes not—to a new relationship to nature in general’ (12). Timothy Morton, however, memorably refutes reenchantment propositions such as Gibson’s by first citing poet and nature writer John Daniel:

The sky is probably falling. Global warming is happening. But somehow it’s not going to work to call people to arms about that and pretend to know what will work. This is why you shouldn’t teach kids about the dire straits of the rain forest. You should take kids out to the stream out back and show them the water striders. (Daniel in Morton 2007: 12)

Morton goes on to demolish what he perceives to be a dangerous naivety on Daniel’s part, countering that ‘To speak thus is to use the aesthetic as anaesthetic’ (2007: 12). As far as

⁶⁰ In *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation* (2012), David Whitely observes that ‘As adults, we have been used for some time now, particularly, in academic circles, to seeing Disney as the enemy of progressive forces and perhaps the chief promulgator of a gaudy, synthetic and sentimental view of the world that we characterize pejoratively as ‘Disneyfication’ (161). His work goes on to challenge this presupposition in relation to nature, as I point out towards the end of this chapter.

Morton is concerned, re-enchantment—especially when conceived of as arising from an in-situ experience of nature—is a form of denial, paralysing the urgency to act.

But, while evidenced links between enchantment and environmentally conscious behaviour (let alone a green politics) are tenuous at best, I found Jane Bennett's argument for a secular and nonspiritual form of enchantment in *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (2001) to be particularly suited to an analysis of the audience responses to weather and landscape across the whole range of outdoor Shakespeares studied. Although Bennett suggests that enchantment *can* reside in experiences of nature—in weather, landscape, light and darkness, and wildlife, for example—she works with much more varied examples in this book, which precedes *Vibrant Matter* (2010), seeing all matter as part of a larger nature. Unlike Gibson's, Bennett's is 'not a tale of re-enchantment but one that calls attention to the magical sites already there' (2001: 8). Bennett assigns herself the role of disenchantment's 'trash collector' and assembles the discards of modernity's compelling disenchantment narratives to tell an 'alter-tale' of enchantment, which, she proposes, has been simultaneously present all the while (8).⁶¹ Enchantment, Bennett argues more persuasively than Gibson, reinforces attachment to the world: we care for the world because we first feel attached to it. To be enchanted, as Bennett puts forward, 'is to be struck and shaken by the extraordinary that lives amid the familiar and the everyday' (4). Enchantment 'requires active engagement with objects of sensuous experience; it is a state of interactive fascination, not fall-to-your knees awe' (5). Bennett argues—with many caveats—that enchantment may be essential for generating ethically generous behaviour in the longer term (3-4).⁶² A person returning to regular life after an enchanted experience might be more inclined to behave generously towards human and nonhuman others. She summarises, 'I pursue a life with moments of enchantment rather than an enchanted way of life' (10).

⁶¹ Bennett amalgamates stories of a pure, vanished nature lost to modernity under the heading of modernity's 'disenchantment tales', referring to work by Max Weber, Hans Blumenberg, and Simon Critchley (2001: 56). To think of life as disenchanted through these views is to hold that through teleology, Enlightenment rationalism and science, the world has become knowable where not already known. Disenchantment tales maintain that humankind has lost a prior sense of connectedness to nature—often a spiritual connection—and that such loss has been extremely detrimental to both human and nonhuman health.

⁶² David Mazel asks whether 'students who read and write about green texts turn into more thoughtful and effective environmentalists than they might have been otherwise?' (in Estok 2011: 50/42; in Bruckner and Brayton 2011: xxii). Greg Garrard makes a similar point, questioning 'a widespread, untested and untheorized assumption that education *about* the environment [...] delivered *through* the environment [...] will automatically be education *for* the environment' (in Clark 2015: 168). There is little evidence to support such correlative behaviour as yet, although this kind of assumption is widely held.

Ecophobia and enchantment are not, of course, binary opposites. Fear, Bennett points out, can actually coexist with certain kinds of enchanted experiences, as long as fear does not dominate (2001: 5). Across the outdoor Shakespeares studied for this thesis, audience responses to weather and landscape suggested fluctuations between ecophobia and enchantment as some of the affects arising from the experience of being at a theatrical event outdoors. Rather the aesthetic simply bringing about an anaesthetising experience (Morton 2007: 12), the embodied experience of weather in landscape also and often appeared to bring about short-lived moments of enchantment. While there was much of which to be wary in what audience members had to say about weather, landscape, and outdoor Shakespeares, this chapter seeks also to collect the enchanted trash—to reuse Bennett’s idea—in their responses, and to offer it up as a parallel counter story too. I agree with Bennett’s assertion of ‘the effect—always indirect—that a cultural narrative has on the ethical sensibility of its bearers’ (12); that to continuously rehearse stories of disenchantment inhibits imagining alternatives. This is not to succumb to a naive optimism by enthusiastically overstating a case for enchantment, but an attempt to tell a messier and more ecological story around the responses to outdoor Shakespeares, which seemed to produce enchanted as well as ecophobic affects. There are humbling and hopeful ecological implications for acknowledging how much place, space, and environment can disrupt, unsettle, and always remain a little in excess of what Shakespeare or theatre can do.

Shakespeare in the weather

Pray don't talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me quite nervous. (Wilde 2015: 21)

The British obsession with the weather has always been a bit of a joke, the kind of failing for which one could be smugly apologetic. Tim Carroll, Stephen Purcell, and Penelope Woods all point out how in-text references to weather in Shakespeare’s plays, when either confirmed or contradicted by the actual weather in performance at Shakespeare’s Globe, tend to prompt laughter (Carroll 2008: 39; Purcell 2009: 45; Woods 2012: 249). Carroll reflects on directing *The Tempest* at that theatre:

when Trinculo talked about ‘yond black cloud, yond huge one’ (2.2.20), we found, strangely, that it worked just as well whether there was such a cloud or whether the sky was completely blue; two different jokes, two different *kinds* of joke, both delightful. (2008: 39 [original emphasis])

An actor’s looking to the sky when weather is mentioned becomes a shared point of understanding, and is enjoyable both as part of and separate from the rest of the play. Woods,

who cites Carroll's example too, summarises that 'Weather mentioned in the plays always brings a frisson of real-world mediation to audience experience at the open-air theatre' (2012: 251). Mostly, however, the references to weather in the audience conversations of my study concerned being in weather more than they referred to particular moments where weather was mentioned in the plays. Regardless of the conditions in which a performance took place, audience responses invariably referred to their outdoor Shakespeare experiences, as Dobson quips, 'Complete with the weather' (2011:196). Comments like, 'It's a bit chilly. But there's really good views' (7 June 2013 M) or, 'It's cold and it's windy but it's breathtakingly beautiful. It's like nothing I've ever seen before' (6 June 2013 M) referred to the experience of being a spectator in weather. More pertinently, 'I thought the rain might be distracting but it wasn't. I think it did start to shape my imagination' (13 September 2013 M), and, 'For me it was when Mark Antony came in and he was wet and his hair was wet so you knew he was coming off a battle from the sea. For me that's when it kind of all came together' (6 June 2013 M) were direct references to weather influencing the reception of the play.

Morton asserts that 'reassuringly trivial conversation about the weather' is no longer possible because it now 'either trails off into a disturbingly meaningful silence, or someone mentions global warning' (2010: 28) and Gabriel Egan announces that a belief widely held during the Elizabethan period—that human activity can affect the weather—emerges as less superstitious in light of the science of climate change (2006: 4). But, while evidence amasses to suggest that human behaviour is responsible, after all, for changes in the weather, talk of climate change was nowhere to be found in what audience members had to say across the performances of my study. Weather was the context and conditions for engaging with a performance and, although audience members' weather-talk might have been ecophobic at times, they were—at least outwardly—more concerned with personal comfort than they appeared to be with climate-change. Neither just a crutch for the socially unimaginative, nor veiled anxieties about global warming, changes in the weather appeared to be precisely what kept the weather on the tips of tongues.

Contra Morton, ethnographers Phillip Vannini et al argue that it is because we *weather* weather—'weather', they point out, is a verb as well as a noun—that weather is so prolific in our spoken conversations (2011:13). They propose that 'We could not chit-chat about the weather, or attempt to predict it, if it did not move' (13). Similarly pursuing a phenomenology of weather, David Abram suggests that talking about the weather is 'an ever-present reminder that the reality we inhabit is ultimately beyond our human control' (2010:140). According to

Abram, weather has a direct bearing on the people in it, affecting mood, memory, and imagination.

Wind, rain, snow, fog, hail, open skies, heavy overcast – each element, or mood, articulates the invisible medium in a unique manner, sometimes rendering it (partly) visible to our eyes, or more insistently palpable upon our skin. Each affects the relation between our body and the living land in a specific way, altering the tenor of our reflections and the tonality of our dreams. (2010: 141)

The heatwave of 2013 followed the second wettest and one of the dullest summers on record in the U.K. Summer 2014 was wet and warm too, although without reaching the same highs as 2013 (Met Office 2013/2014). Performances could not go ahead without perceived cooperation from the weather, a living and changeable agent, closed to negotiation. In-situ, audience members spoke about the weather at the time of the interview, ‘It’s actually one of the warmer nights I’ve ever been at the Minack. So I’m actually not freezing cold, which is really nice’(6 June 2013 M), and, ‘I think everybody’s a little bit cold and so if you look around one or two people are sort of hiding under blankets and everything’ (15 June 2013 HBG). They also reflected on how weather affected how they felt during the performances, ‘It is pretty chilly in the woods. It was nice to be out here and to get a little bit of warmth before we finish’ (6 July 2014 S). And they spoke about weather as memories of previous outdoor performances, ‘It’s the first time I’ve watched open-air theatre and it hasn’t rained. That’s good. I’ve always tried in the past and it’s always been cold and wet and miserable but today it’s been lovely’ (26 May 2013 WG), and, ‘I mean both times we’ve been here, the weather has been good. I don’t know what it would be if it had been sighing down with rain’ (5 July 2014 S). It is possible to read many of these responses to weather as gesturing towards ecophobia—understood as fear—given the risk around a performance’s cancellation and the personal stakes for comfort throughout.

Demonstrating how ecophobia could coexist with enchantment, however, audience member Rachel’s comments—uttered at Minack as horizontal rain pelted our faces and mist masked the stage, obscuring the landscape—simultaneously evinced traces of both as affects. Her remarks *about* the weather, spoken *in* the weather, recalled past discomfort outweighed by the memory of an enchanted experience.

I’ve been here before in glorious sunshine. Not quite the damp weather we’re having today. I was actually sat in the first seat down there. I melted into the stone it was that warm but it was magical. The scenery out there was stunning, the sea was blue and it was just a gorgeous day. It just added to the atmosphere of the theatre. (13 September 2013 M)

For Alex and Joey too, fluctuations in the weather enhanced the performance experience, pointing towards enchantment. They spoke of affective responses to weather, as they discussed a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Ripley Castle.

Alex: But the sun peeking out allows, I think, the players in the play-within-the-play maybe were more playful. I don't know. I imagine...

Joey: It's like a big bonus.

Alex: Yes.

Joey: You know, and everyone gets excited about the weather and, you know, when it peeks out at that moment everyone rejoices and the performance is enhanced that way. (6 July 2014 S)

It would be reductive and environmentally determinist to suggest that gradations of wet and dry conditions resulted in gradations of ecophobia and enchantment respectively, but wet weather was certainly most often personified as an enemy against whom the audience and actors were fighting. In wet, cold, or windy conditions the human-animal world pitted itself against the natural world, setting up a kind of resistance to the weather in the hope that the play would be well-served. Audience members frequently used violent, warlike, and nationalist language to describe the relationship between Shakespeare and the weather. Phrases such as 'battling the elements', 'fighting the wind', 'the weather is our enemy', 'the British weather is merciless', 'Dunkirk or Blitz spirit', and 'British stoicism' were commonplace. Purcell points out that 'Shakespeare as a source of national pride, is often in danger of becoming a symbol of nationalism' (2005: 83), and Shakespeare, as the *raison d'être* for these outdoor performance events, potentially compounded the sense of ecophobia working alongside a kind of Britishness that veered towards nationalism. As Jen Harvie argues, nationalism is not a given but 'creatively produced and staged' (2005: 2), and some of the ecophobic language that audience members used to describe the weather might be read as productive of nationalist tendencies. As well as the fearful ecophobia in evidence, there was also something potentially closer to a more troubling 'hatred' in the bellicose language often used to describe the weather. Morton provokes that 'Only an ecological language opposed to the phantasmagorical positivities of nation-speak is anywhere near legitimate' (2007: 102) and, certainly, the audience comments came nowhere near an ecological language such as Morton envisages, mildly nationalist as they were.

One of the bi-products of this ecophobic vitriol was that it promoted a supportive relationship between audience and actors. As anthropologists Sarah Strauss and Ben Orlove find, 'physical experience of the weather provides a common focal point in many societies, through both commiseration and celebration' (2003: 3). Requests that individuals refrain

from using umbrellas to avoid blocking others' views of the stage were met with smiles, and introductions like, 'if it rains... you will get wet' generated laughter, establishing camaraderie between actors and audience members from the outset. The audience would endure what the actors would endure and vice versa. Ralph Alan Cohen observes one such supportive audience/ actor relationship in evidence at Shakespeare's Globe, noting that 'when the rain falls on the standees, they respond with laughter and with an increased determination to enjoy the show, a determination that communicates itself to the actors, who raise their games in appreciation' (2008: 223). I observed similar resolution in audiences at wet performances. In wet weather, audience members were less critical of the performances and vehemently enthusiastic about the actors' perseverance, generating a perceived bond between audience and actors. Reciprocally, the actors tended to praise the audiences for their endurance—speeding up their delivery of the text to relieve soggy spectators. At an especially soaking performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* at Minack, I huddled with a group of friends under a door frame, looking out to sea. Tara remarked, 'In a way it almost makes you feel more connected especially as you're going through it as they're going through it' (13 September 2013 M). Eileen also empathized with the actors, saying, 'I really felt for them in the wet. Their costumes were sopping but they kept going with so much energy!', and Chris reflected, 'You could tell that they were working really hard and it almost made the story more alive and urgent' (13 September 2013 M). In these responses, wet weather appeared to have the effect of undermining mimesis, by highlighting the artificiality of the performance practice and drawing attention to the act of acting as acting, as labour, as audience members empathized with actors rather than with their fictitious characters.⁶³

While the apparent bonding between actors and audience members, expressed in terms of 'Blitz or Dunkirk spirit' and 'British stoicism', all compounded a sense of ecophobia, the physical process of weathering the performances simultaneously complicated this criticism. Because the metaphorical battle between audience and weather was one where the human participants were ultimately powerless, the embodied experience of weather might also be regarded as reminding and reinforcing a sense of human powerlessness in the face of the weather-world. This does not dilute the comfortable and culturally conservative aspects of these outdoor Shakespeares, but it does muddy them, especially in the contemporary ecological moment in which they took place. Ongoing, physical processes of weathering therefore provide the context for the discussion that comes next, which looks critically at ideas of landscape and scenery as expressed in response to the performances, bringing

⁶³ There is an interesting body of work looking at the labour of performance in a special issue of *Performance Research Journal On Labour and Performance* (Klein and Kunst 2012).

together some of the ideas around landscape already touched on in previous chapters as I continue to discuss the themes of ecophobia and enchantment that were mixed up in and entangled with landscape and Shakespeare.

Staring at the scenery

Una Chaudhuri argues that ‘the ‘nature’ that is landscape’s subject is never free of cultural coding’ (2002: 12) and, across the audience responses, landscape was culturally coded as theatre, and as Shakespearean theatre at that. Whatever the place of performance, descriptions of the surrounding landscape repeatedly drew on the language of the theatre—of *scenery* and *backdrops*—suggesting that the landscape, perceived as ‘framing’ the performance space, was considered a ‘resource’ in the service of performance (Chaudhuri 1995: 25). Baz Kershaw develops Jean Baudrillard’s work on the spectacle to suggest that ‘zoos and theatres [...] rely on a crucial separation between observed and observer, they conjure up an act of ‘looking-on’ which tends to turn ‘nature’ – plant, animal, human – into spectacle and then, too often, commodity’ (2007: 303). Looking at the scenery was a part of the activity that audience members were engaged in at these outdoor Shakespeares, and the scenery they spoke of can be thought of as commodified through this process, coded first as landscape, then as theatrical scenery. Naomi, for instance, described a performance at the Willow Globe as, ‘mutually enjoyable so it was a celebration of the play and the surrounding scenery’ (25 May 2013 WG). Nora referred to ‘scenery’ too at Barking Park. What would she remember about the event? ‘Obviously the scenery. Obviously you don’t need, like, a setting. They’re using the space...nature’ (18 July 2013 TVB). Lisa, on a picnic rug at Brandon Hill Park in Bristol’s city centre, compared the view from the park with indoor theatre seating plans, saying, ‘I think we’ve got a particularly good seat because we’ve got the view over there of the hills’ (6 July 2013 HBB). Philippa, at the same performance, also spoke about the landscape as though it were a theatrical setting, commenting, ‘I guess that’s the beauty of not having too much set. If you... because you’re not going to get any much better setting if you have a beautiful big lake or a stately home or a nice...you know, the views today are amazing’ (6 July 2013 HBB). And Alex, at Ripley Castle, explained that the landscape enhanced the performance and that the performance enhanced the landscape by way of return:

It enhances it, I'd say because it's already a beautiful setting and the performance makes it even more beautiful, especially with the use of space, you know. The first time I ever visited this space was for one of Sprite's performances and, you know, it's just a perfect way to showcase the park, the setting. It makes the exploration of the space more, more intimate and more cultural, you know and really adds to it, I think. (6 July 2014 S)

Alex appeared to see the landscaped gardens as serving the performance, further culturing the already cultured castle gardens. Liam responded to the same performance by saying, 'It shows that it's more than a set of gardens, that you can actually make something live in that natural space' (6 July 2014 S), indicating either that the gardens were not alive prior to the performance, or that the playtext was enlivened by being enacted in the gardens. Either way, the gardens, as Alex and Liam considered them, were a backdrop to human drama and might be understood as evincing the kind of ecophobia that Estok sees lurking 'behind landscaped gardens' (2011: 4), imaginarily appropriating living landscapes for aesthetic purposes.

Chaudhuri is wary too of the 'persistent' idea that landscape offers 'peaceful repose and even enhanced health' (2002: 12), in spite of Raymond Williams's longstanding challenge to these assumptions in *The Country and the City* (1985). It is not that enhanced health or repose are problems in themselves, but that potential dangers lurk in Western conceptions of rural landscapes, inherited from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape painting: the isolated egoistical position of the viewer outside of the picture; the concealment of labour, violence, and exclusion; and the flattening out of living landscapes into two-dimensional backdrops (Chaudhuri 2002: 14-16). Reflecting on what he sees as human alienation and estrangement from nature—more of modernity's disenchantment—Abram cautions, 'Even if we venture beyond the walls of our office or metropolis, we often find ourselves merely staring at the scenery' (2010: 92), and his concerns are echoed by the AHRC network for Site, Performance and Environmental Change who ask, 'What kinds of efficacy or agency might become possible by using performance as a tool to help us reconceive of the environment as the very source of our human drama, rather than simply a 'backdrop' to it?' (Performance Footprint 2013).⁶⁴ Within the audience responses, it was certainly possible to read evidence of landscapes appropriated as theatrical backdrops, consumed by sleepy, staring subjects who neither understood where they were nor how they were implicated and entangled within these places.

Adrian, however, in the audience for *Antony and Cleopatra* at Minack, voiced some of the complexity of talking about scenery in the context of outdoor performance, highlighting confusion arising from the overlapping metaphors of theatre and landscape.

I was on occasions distracted by the scenery... scenery as in surroundings rather than scenery within the play. I mean it's very difficult when you come here. [...] you don't

⁶⁴ The AHRC network for Site, Performance and Environmental Change network is made up of Steve Bottoms, J.D. Dewsbury, Aaron Franks, Dee Heddon, Wallace Heim, Anthony Jackson, Baz Kershaw, Paula Kramer, Sally Mackey, Helen Nicholson, Tim Nunn, Alison Parfitt, Mike Pearson, Alan Read, and Phil Smith.

just sit there and look at the play. I mean it's a 360 degree panoramic experience so you've got the play and the surroundings. (6 June 2013 M)

Adrian's comments identified a lack of adequate language to differentiate between the fictional locations in the play and the landscape surrounding the theatre. He also usefully distinguished between landscape as the built and/or imagined scenery complementing the play's contents (thought of as part of the performance) and the landscape surrounding the place of performance (thought of as independent to the performance). None of the performances I am looking at utilized much built stage scenery and, consequently, very few audience members remarked on constructed scenery. Slightly refining Adrian's distinction, then, my analysis considers both 'scenery as in surroundings', attending to responses that referred to the landscape independent of the performance, and 'scenery as in the play', attending to the landscape's perceived aesthetic contribution to the performance. As discussed above, both ways of thinking indicate anthropocentric readings of aestheticized landscapes that accord with Estok's proposition for an ecophobic compulsion to manage, tidy, and trim. But while audience members described the scenery as a 'backdrop' to the performances—to the contrived human (Shakespearean) drama taking place—their experiences of weathering the landscapes equally enlivened this scenery, fostering what might be considered to be enchanted experiences. However landscape was coded or framed by the people who spoke of it, a weathered landscape had different affective capacities to a painted backdrop. It was at this juncture that the affective ecopolitics of audience responses became more contradictory, evidencing both potentially ecophobic and enchanted responses.

Scenery 'as in surroundings' and scenery 'as in the play'

As I have attempted to show throughout the thesis, the places of which audience members spoke were often perceived as in excess of the performances—and this excess was attributable to how they spoke about the experience of being outdoors. Accordingly, many of the references to landscapes considered a landscape's contribution to generating the kinds of 'affective atmospheres' (Anderson 2009) discussed in the previous chapter. Stacy, for instance, reflected on the 'scenery' at Barking Park in terms of its atmosphere, saying, 'The change of scenery with the different scenes was really exciting actually and it kind of added a new atmosphere to things' (18 July 2013 TVB). The landscape was exciting and atmospheric, so not entirely inert, despite Stacy's coding it as theatrical 'scenery'. Similarly, for Maria at Minack, the sea formed a backdrop but it was not completely without any affective agency.

It's just amazing, I mean, being outside and the backdrop of the sea as well. It's just a wonderful concept really that the lady had. That you could have outside theatre with just this backdrop, you know. It's just that the sea is a calming influence anyway, I think. But, you know, and it is... it's just amazing isn't it? (13 September 2013 M)

In both of these instances, culture framed the landscape in which the performance took place, turning it into scenery. The scenery was perceived as a resource for the performance but also as affective in its own right, simultaneously a little in excess of the performance.

Of more particular interest were the many comments referring more specifically to the idea of 'scenery as in the play' in relation to the landscapes and places of performance, recalling the sense of a landscape's complementing the performance content discussed in Chapters One and Two. Chapter One looked at suggestions that Minack and the Willow Globe made good homes for *The Tempest* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* respectively. Chapter Two considered theatrical realism and 'ecomimesis' (Morton 2007) at performances of *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *After The Tempest* on walks in the woods. This sense of the landscape complementing the performance content recurred across all of the different case studies and tended to be expressed in terms of delight, recalling these prior analyses. At *Romeo and Juliet* in the National Trust gardens of Greenway, South Devon, Joan linked the walled gardens with the play's Italian urban geography, saying, 'And because it's sort of all walled in, it gives you that feeling that you could be in Verona', (15 June 2013 HBG). Lyra, at *Dream* at Ripley, commented on how the trees had been integrated into the performance, explaining, 'They make good use of the bowers of the trees. You know, they're not just a backdrop' (5 July 2014 S). It is interesting to note that Lyra insisted the trees were not a backdrop, even as she suggested that the performers *used* them.

As well as providing a home for *The Tempest*, Minack was repeatedly referred to as a suitable backdrop for *Antony and Cleopatra* because of the play's textual references to sea-battles. Nicola said, 'It's set in Alexandria, by the coast, and we've just had the sea with the first battle... the first battle at sea and you've got the sea behind us. It's magic' (7 June 2013 M), and James reflected, 'The scenes that stood out the most for me were the battle scenes at sea. That came over...The way they did that...acting as the boat. That went very well...with the sea as the backdrop' (6 June 2013 M). Mike elaborated on the how he imagined the play's locales grafted onto the Cornish landscape:

Well, I kind of think it's funny because when you're watching it... like in this one I can imagine like certainly the Egyptian thing certainly being a setting to the Red Sea or something and then in Rome... You know, I don't know... Well the scenes tend to lend themselves to having... there's nothing to say they shouldn't have an expansive ocean behind them. And I think it kind of builds in to the whole, to the

whole show. I like it. I can imagine them doing it with a backdrop like that. (6 June 2013 M)

But if the pleasure that audience members expressed in response to perceived complementarity between play and landscape warranted caution on the grounds of ecophobic readings of cultured landscapes, a form of enchantment—‘interactive fascination, not fall-to-your-knees awe’ (Bennett 2001: 5)—was also expressed as arising from these perceived thematic links. It was in the comments about a perceived confluence of scenery ‘as in the play’ and the performance itself, that Shakespeare’s role in mediating a tension between enchantment and ecophobia began to emerge. For instance, at *After The Tempest* at Barking Park, Sophie and Neve demonstrated a kind of ‘interactive fascination’ when they described a moment of feeling captivated by a perceived coming-together of the actors’ actions and the park environment:

Sophie: And then just like Prospero... when the plane was coming across...He perfectly spoke to it about the “I have dimmed...” that you thought ‘wow’ [*referring to the actor delivering Prospero’s lines to air airplane overheard ‘I have bedimmed the noontide sun’* (5, 1, 41-42)]. And then also it’s just quite a well set-out park with having the different sections, so you kind of feel like they could just be on an island in a way and they’re coming out of nature really.

Neve: And there’s very limited props what they had. A lot of it was made from wood and sticks that they found here and it incorporated a lot of what was around making it all feel a bit like magic, a bit like one thing. (18 July 2013 TVB)

Sophie and Neve recognized that the acting was make-believe, they were aware that the ‘things’ used in the performance were stage props created from found items, but they still imagined that they might be on Prospero’s island, even in the constructed nature of the south London park. When Neve said that the experience felt ‘a bit like one thing’, she seemed to be speaking about an experience of a moment in the performance within the landscape that might be understood as enchanted, where she was ‘simultaneously transfixed in wonder and transported by sense’, was ‘both caught up and carried away’ (Bennett 2001: 5).

The more specific the perceived interaction between Shakespeare, landscape, and weather the more audience members indicated experiences that could be read as enchanted. Izzy, also at Barking Park, picked out a particular speech from the performance, saying, ‘There was a scene by the tree where Caliban was talking about “The isle is full of noises”, and at that point there was a squirrel running up and down the tree and it was that kind of things are always going on and wildlife is all around you’ (18 July 2013 TVB). Rather than thinking of the landscape as static or passive, she indicated a heightened awareness of moving, living world. Izzy found herself enjoying the experience, temporarily enchanted by nature:

I thought that was... It's really, really beautiful and it kind of feels like... I don't know... like it's not as boring because there's a lot of things to capture your visual attention and there's a lot of distractions but it's nice. You notice things you haven't noticed before because you don't take the time to look at them. (18 July 2013)

For Izzy, the perceived convergence of a familiar piece of Shakespeare's text, the ideas contained within the speech, and the living scenery was enchanting, indicating 'active engagement with objects of sensuous experience' (Bennett 2001: 5) within a pleasurable and imaginative experience.

Carol and Dave, also at *After The Tempest* but in Holland Park, West London, similarly demonstrated enchantment arising from a perceived confluence of the elemental themes in Shakespeare's play, the landscape, the weather, and the time of day. They discussed:

Carol: In the woods when they were asleep under the trees – I thought that was really good.

Dave: Especially the last bit as well because the location here in Holland Park is quite magical. Especially once the evening starts to set in. (25 July 2013 TVH)

Dave went on to recall the delivery of a particular extract from *The Tempest*, which he linked to both the living landscape and the weather in his immediate memory of the performance.

I think the ending... Ariel's speech at the end is one of Shakespeare's best speeches and to have it in a setting like this with the sun going down... having gone down... and little stars have just come out and it's such an effective speech and, in this location, it's the best experience I've had of that particular speech ever. (25 July 2013 TVH)⁶⁵

Together, these potentially enchanted experiences were not quite examples of aleatoric effects as Woods defined the term (2012: 251) because they appeared to be as much dependent upon the 'affective atmospheres' (Anderson 2009) that were generated by being in weather and landscape outdoors as they were upon specific, coincidentally timed encounters. It was this experience of enchantment, arising from the in-situ experience of outdoor Shakespeares, of culture in nature, within a particular kind of affective atmosphere, that, I suggest, pointed to Richard Kerridge's argument for 'green pleasure' (2009), made in the context of Soper's larger argument for 'alternative hedonist' forms of consumption as the basis of an emergent ecopolitics (Soper 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011).

Green pleasure and alternative hedonism

⁶⁵ 'Ariel's speech', to which Dave referred was actually Prospero's 'Our revels now are ended...' (4, 1, 148), which had been assigned to the character of Ariel in Teatro Vivo's adaptation of the play.

In his contribution to *The Politics and Pleasures of Consuming Differently* (Soper, Ryle, and Thomas 2009), Kerridge describes a ‘green pleasure’ as something ‘that follows the logic of environmentalism—by using less carbon, deepening one’s love of things already at hand, appreciating cycles of growth and renewal in the local and global ecosystems, understanding and taking delight in interdependency’ (2009:131). Kerridge makes his argument in the context of Soper’s sustained argument for alternative hedonism, which is a pragmatic ecopolitical argument for ‘new forms of desire rather than fears of ecological disaster, as the most likely motivating force in any shift towards a more sustainable economic order’ (2009: 3). While Bennett’s enchantment ethic broadly refers to a universally applicable experience that might bring about greater generosity (2001:10), Soper’s alternative hedonism describes a demographically limited structure of feeling, restricted and applicable to affluent practices of consumption that represent both ‘a distinctively moral form of self-pleasuring’ and ‘a self-interested form of altruism which takes pleasure in committing to a more socially accountable mode of consuming’ (Soper 2009: 5). Despite Bennett and Soper’s opposing stances on human exceptionalism, enchantment and alternative hedonism share a focus on pleasure and attachment in ecopolitical contexts. Although the enchantment that I identified in audience responses to landscape and weather did not entirely accord with Kerridge’s definition of a green pleasure, many aspects of the enchanted responses did suggest a ‘deepening one’s love of things already at hand’ and some sense of ‘appreciating cycles of growth and renewal in the local and global ecosystems, understanding and taking delight in interdependency’ (2009: 131) that can be carefully, provisionally, and tentatively considered as alternative hedonist.

The bicycle is one of the examples Soper uses to make her point, given both the intrinsic pleasures of cycling and the knowledge that cycling is less harmful than other forms of transport (2009:5). Clearly, choosing to attend an outdoor Shakespeare is not ‘alternative’ in the same sense as choosing a bicycle over a fuel-guzzling vehicle. Audience members were obviously engaged in material forms of consumption by paying for tickets to an entertainment experience. With the exception of performances at the Willow Globe, where renewable energy and organic farming were part of the theatre’s ethos, audience members did not appear to conceive of their experiences of attending outdoor Shakespeares as ‘low carbon’, or, if they did, they certainly did not articulate their responses with any references to sustainability. But there was also a sense that the scale of these performances and the green pleasures of the outdoor experience presented as ‘alternative’ to certain forms of resource-heavy theatre, as much as they represented ‘popular’ forms of Shakespeare that might be read as ‘alternative’ to mainstream productions (Purcell 2009). The case studies at which I have looked tended to feature amateur or low-paid professional actors, ticket prices were

comparatively inexpensive, and audience members were aware that the money exchanged for the experience was supporting socially-engaged, often local, or charitable organisations. Audience members tended to travel short distances to get to the performances, with the exception of Minack where holidays brought many to Cornwall (and with the further complication of touring theatre companies such as Heartbreak Productions, who traversed much of the U.K. in a van). Audience responses to outdoor Shakespeares tended to hover somewhere between representing the 'alternative vision of the good life', identified by Soper (2009: 4) and implicating themselves in the same kinds of consumption that have proved both environmentally destructive and sensually ungratifying that she also invokes (Soper 2011: 24).

A relation between enchantment and green pleasure might be observed by noting some of the language around the performances feeling 'natural' or 'organic'. Lyra at *Dream* spoke about how the relationship between the landscape and the performance felt 'natural', explaining, 'And they used the grounds very well, I thought as well, the kind of the trees and the kind of set scenes were great. Well, you could do it on a stage but it's contrived on a stage. Here it's natural' (6 July 2014 S). Alex and Joey referred to *Dream* in the woods as an 'organic' experience:

Alex: I liked when they were in the trees with Titania and then with her, the child, the fairies, I like that.

Joey: That was a really appropriate scene, you're right. And the building of the scene too seemed very natural. It seemed like it was not just a set but also part of the grounds.

Alex: It was organic.

Joey: It was organic. Yeah. (6 July 2014 S)

The idea of a performance being referred to as 'natural' and 'organic' seems to be suggestive of a contemporary green pleasure as well as it speaks of an aesthetic judgement. The pleasure expressed at being outdoors pointed to a sense of enchantment and appeared to be as much about attending a cultural event outdoors as it was about attending a cultural event. Rachel, another audience member at *Dream* first spoke about a sense of complementarity between the landscape and the performance, incorporating comments about the liveliness of the scenery as well about as light and darkness into her thoughts:

It makes it a much deeper experience for me. It's very, very good to be in a theatre and the darkness adds a similar thing that the light adds to an outdoor performance. So with the darkness you can have the make believe things, the darkness you can imagine what's going on, but here when they go off scene, they continue acting, even around the corner and it just feels... there was a bit when Helena was following, was

running after Demetrius, but it was just like while it was a scene change and they just happened... and it just makes it a lot more kind of 3D. (6 July 2014 S)

She went on to explain what the experience of the performance meant for her in terms of taking pleasure in the place:

I get to see it with new eyes. So if I came to Ripley Castle, what would happen is I would be... I would have argued with my children beforehand, I will have needed to... at the wrong point one of them will have needed the toilet break, at which point my partner doesn't look as attractive because actually they're not pulling their weight and blah blah blah. Whereas with this you take a break from all of that and you shift state and because you shift state, you think "Isn't it good to be here and aren't the trees majestic?", rather than just quickly travelling through it because actually they've got to be in bed by seven kind of feeling. It's very much just to sit and be in a clearing in the wood. Like when do we actually have permission from ourselves to do that? The birds are singing and the wind is blowing and this incredible, astonishing stuff is happening in front. (6 July 2014 S)

It seemed not to be a lack of imagination or an incapacity to making meaning from the words alone that was behind Rachel's response to being at *Dream* in the woods, but a green pleasure derived from the enchanted experience of the cultural event in the landscape. She expressed pleasure in the time made available by the performance, a slowing down, a deepening her appreciation for 'things already at hand' (Kerridge 2009:131), things she might have otherwise missed. Did Rachel's comments evidence the 'distinctively moral form of self-pleasuring', the 'self-interested form of altruism which takes pleasure in committing to a more socially accountable mode of consuming' that Soper describes (2009: 5)? Not quite, perhaps, but she came close enough to point to the curiously contradictory affects that the audience responses to outdoor Shakespeares encompassed, fluctuating between being environmentally appropriate, exploitative, and conservative, and being consciously entangled within ecological networks and attentive to the fluxes of the weather.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified themes of ecophobia and enchantment running through audience responses to weather and landscape, spanning the range of outdoor Shakespeares taken in as part of the ethnography. Estok's 'ecophobia' (2011) can be read as present in how audience members articulated their relationships with weather—as both fearful of and in opposition to weather—as well as in their readings of the landscapes as theatrical scenery. The process of weathering these landscapes, however, complicated any ecophobic coding of landscape as theatrical scenery. Just how much these affects can be linked to Shakespeare specifically and how much they might apply to all kinds of outdoor performance is more difficult to gauge. Landscape, weather, wildlife, light, and darkness—the focus of the second

part of this thesis—would be common to all forms of outdoor performance, hence the overarching argument for first thinking about the outdoor setting as something shared, before thinking about other ways in which performances are organized spatially. Problems also remain with the anthropocentrism of thinking about any kind of nature in the service of culture—both terms narrowly understood as set out in the Introduction. All of the case study performances attempted to appropriate nature for cultural purposes, albeit in different ways. But audience responses suggested that nature escaped capture too, always managing to remain a little in excess of the performances in the imaginations of those attending them. While recognising the cultural problems inevitable with the form, and indeed with any form of outdoor performance, it may be that there is some (limited) ecopolitical potential in the enchantment they can facilitate.

Following Bennett's proposition, enchantment might reinforce attachment to the world and 'augment the motivational energy needed to move selves from the endorsement of ethical principles to the actual practice of ethical behaviours' (2010: xi). Ecocritic David Whitely finds evidence of the potential of Bennett's enchantment in another unlikely place as he presents a compelling argument for the overlooked potential in a certain group of Walt Disney's animated films to promote care for the natural world, especially in young children (2012). Whitely qualifies, of course, that any ethic of care likely 'depends as much on the culture, experience and sensitivities we bring to the experience of watching the films as it does on the qualities of the films themselves' (167). His point equally applies to how we might regard the enchanted experiences of outdoor Shakespeares. Ultimately, audience responses and any future behaviours arising from the experience of the theatrical events were always partially dependent upon whatever sensibilities they brought with them to the performances (knowledge of which is beyond the methodological scope of this research, but which poses an interesting question to, and methodological problem for, future audience research of many kinds). Such enchanted experiences would also have to be part of a much larger sequence of experiences and circumstances to have any kind of traction.

The audience responses to weather and landscape, where they suggested both ecophobic and enchanted affects, did therefore seem to reach the limits of the phenomenological approach that Clark argues presents the greatest challenge to much twenty-first century ecopolitics in the age of the Anthropocene (2014: 284). However much enchantment, green pleasure, and alternative hedonism have some potential to influence ethical sensibilities, Shakespeare on his own, performed outdoors in any kind of park, garden, woodland, or by the sea, was not enough to speak directly to our current ecological moment.

But, although I agree with theatre-maker and climate-change activist Kendra Fanconi, when she provokes that in terms of performance and ecology, 'Thematic resonance is not enough' (2015: n.p.), and while I am cognisant of Morton's criticism that localized actions are potentially distracting, as 'fending off the scope of the crisis and the vastness and depth of interconnectedness' (2010: 32), Bennett's idea of enchantment nags nonetheless and seems to ask for a more sympathetic reading of these responses to weather and landscape too, even if all they achieve is a contribution to affirming an alternative hedonist politics of consumption. Audience members were not anaesthetized by the aesthetics of the landscapes, as Morton suggested (2007: 12): they could not just stare at the scenery because they had to physically weather the performances. And the experience of weathering the landscapes enhanced the performances' potential to enchant. Perceived threats from the weather made the enchanted experiences all the more fragile, all the more ephemeral, and all the more valued as a result. The best of Shakespeare, bellowed at the sky, couldn't change the weather.

CONCLUSION: Weathering Outdoor Performance

This thesis has looked at audiences for outdoor Shakespeares in England and Wales. It sought to assess where practice, research, and theory arising in connection with site-specific and ecological theatre and performance-making might illuminate the reception of Shakespeare's plays in outdoor settings, and whether there was potential for the audience responses to be put into a dialogue with some of the claims made for self-consciously site-specific and ecological performance forms in turn. Initially, I asked how, even when outdoor Shakespeares are not intended to be 'site-specific', in what ways audience members might perceive the outdoor environment to be contributing to their experiences of the live performance event? The second research question queried how audience research might productively challenge the ways we think about the experience of place and environment at outdoor Shakespeares? Following the first year's fieldwork, I refocused these broad and overarching questions towards the stakes for ideas of nature, environment, and ecology at outdoor Shakespeares.

The ethnographic methodology aspired to allow previously unheard audience members to account for their own experiences, despite the ethnographer's role in crafting of the final chapters, and despite the acknowledgement that 'experience' in the positivist sense cannot be captured and served up as writing. My approach to writing the ethnography attempted to provide a polyvocal account of how individuals respond to outdoor Shakespeares, making space for contrasting perspectives to be heard. Theoretically, the written ethnography meandered carefully between ecophenomenological and broadly materialist approaches, attending to the 'outdoor' in outdoor Shakespeares, while extracts from interviews form the core and the through-line of the chapters. The research subsequently contributes to the fields of Shakespearean ecocriticism, site-specific theatre, ecology and performance, and audience research. What I found was, that 'thinking' agency back to the nonhuman matter, organic and nonorganic—not that it ever lacked agency, but that by turning our attention towards the nonhuman—urges us to bring together many kinds of performance as united by their happening outdoors in weather, prior to classifying them by other spatial configurations or aesthetic arrangements. While an aestheticized, cultured Nature was significant to how audience members anticipated the performances, a vibrant, material nature also intervened, interrupted, unsettled, disturbed, wetted, and dried their expectations and experiences.

In the first chapter on Minack and the Willow Globe—two nature-theatres inspired by Shakespeare—I found that although performances were not pitched as 'site-based', nor

were they intended to ‘collaborate’ with the theatre spaces in ways that were more than referential, the wider places inflected how audience members attempted to put their experiences of the performances into words. Place always remained a little in excess of Shakespeare at these theatres. The second chapter found that when performances *were* designed to ‘collaborate’ with the spaces—billed as promenade, site-specific, or immersive—audience members indicated that they were drawn into the performances and more attentive to the stories. Across all three of the productions discussed in Chapter Two, clusters of trees stood in for fairy tale woods, and audience members, unprompted, spoke of feeling as though they were ‘participating’ in the plays. As they discovered hidden parts of the parks on journeys with the actors, the performances usually involved a writing-over of the parks’ spatial and temporal histories. Even here, however, the trees always retained a little of their independence, remaining a little in excess of the performances.

I then went on to look at the kinds of conversations that recurred in interviews across the whole range of case studies and performance contexts. No matter where they were, or what performances were doing formally, socially, or aesthetically, audience members made multiple and multifarious references to wildlife, light and darkness, landscape, and weather. Obviously, the details of these references varied from place to place, but they pointed to the affective capacities of nature, sometimes romantically, sentimentally conceived of as Nature, but also at least a little alive in its own right. Chapter Three argued for an affective atmosphere as articulated by audience members, arising from perceived intrusions from, interactions with, and space-sharing with birds, animals, and light and darkness, and then the final chapter developed affects in relation to weather and landscape, attempting to identify the ecopolitical implications of responses to these outdoor Shakespeares in their U.K. contexts. I argued that ecophobia and enchantment were present and sometimes mutually reinforcing in the responses, and, tentatively, that—extraneous circumstances allowing and caveats aplenty—some might also have the potential to support an alternative hedonist ecopolitics.

As I explained at the outset, because of the decision to focus on audience responses and because of the emphasis on environment, the thesis does not carry out extensive or detailed performance analysis. Neither have I looked at what the places do for readings of the plays, beyond thinking about the consequences for the places and—sideways—for the plays in the places. Although I began by doing this, it soon became apparent that the audience responses warranted considerable attention on their own. In future, it would be worth conducting more rounded ethnographic work bringing together audience research, environmental ethnography, and performance analysis. If I were beginning the project again,

I would anticipate honing the research focus as part of the fieldwork. While this kind of refinement happened anyway, and necessarily, I could have been more prepared for the messiness of fieldwork and could have entered the field with a greater readiness to allow the project's direction to be determined by the ethnographic encounters.

By selecting certain themes about which to write, others were necessarily left unexplored. Throughout, I have pointed to memories of previous performances in the weather being activated by attending outdoor Shakespeares: being in outdoor spaces stimulated memories of being at performances in outdoor spaces in the past. Further scholars might pay attention to this rehearsal of memory uttered by audience members at present performances. As they recounted anecdotes of previous performances in the weather, audience members always referred to weather at least as much as performance. Indeed, over the three years working on this project, I have consistently met with people sharing their own memories of outdoor performances, always with reference to the embodied experience of the weather, as soon as I have mentioned the topic. There is scope for further research into the longitudinal effects of performance, audiences, and memory that might be garnered from speaking to individuals in audiences prior to the commencement of any kind of theatrical event.

My research has therefore identified considerable opportunity for considering weather in relation to place, performance, and audience response. This could be fruitfully extended to all kinds of performance in outdoor spaces, and the boundaries between 'indoors' and 'outdoors' could be pushed much further. Such a grouping of performances by their sharing of weather before other spatial, aesthetic, political, or contextual factors might include all forms of outdoor theatre, street arts, parades, and concerts, but would also include some site-specific, promenade, immersive performances too. The conscious choice to mount or attend a performance in weather remains the marker of a useful categorization, although care is needed so as not to inscribe an indoor/outdoor binary reductively. This thesis contributes to the field by uniting a group of Shakespeares, taking their primary mode of categorization as 'outdoors', and putting the cultural construction of this 'outdoors' under scrutiny through the responses of audience members at these theatrical events. Led by the cultural construction of Nature—perceived as in harmony with Shakespeare—to nonhuman nature, and back to nature as expressed in the audience responses and the wider ethnographic fieldwork, I have inevitably returned to expressing the results in human language, finding the impossibility of any kind of nature/culture binary. Affects were messy and not simply categorized. So too were the 'natures' encountered across the range of interviews, not representing any single understanding of nature that was reflective of any one time period,

but multiple and shifting understandings of what nature might be. The ethnography is offered as an 'opening' (Ingold 2011: 3-4) rather than as a 'final account' (Pearson 2006: 27).

The transitory nature of these outdoor theatre events, happening in unrepeatable weather circumstances, made their reception all the more seeming-ephemeral, intensifying the desire to hold onto what happened by chance and what would be so soon gone. It is important to remember, however, that for the audiences I looked at, being in weather was a choice and not a necessity. As weather encroaches more and more on everyday life, and threatens even those who have the luxury of living mostly securely within walls and under shelter, my research has pointed to the need to consider all kinds of performances in the weather with more care and with a greater sense of how and why this matters.

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APPENDIX ONE

Audience consent form



COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

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Proposal and Consent Form for Research Projects

Title of Research Project:

Outdoor Shakespeares: a study of how environment influences reception and performance aesthetics in open-air Shakespeare productions in the UK.

Name and title of Researcher, and Details of Project:

Evelyn O'Malley, MPhil/PhD in Drama, completion deadline 2015. I am receiving funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

This project aims to:

- demonstrate how performances of Shakespeare in outdoor settings interact with their environment and how the environment shapes audience experience;
- assess where practices, research, ideas and language surrounding site-specific performance, outdoor street arts and early modern performance are, consciously or unconsciously, present and influential in small-scale outdoor Shakespeares.

The interviews will take place between April 2013 and September 2014.

Definition of invited participants:

Audience members attending performances of outdoor Shakespeares during summers between April and September 2013.

Participants under 18 may also be consulted if they are present with a parent/ guardian who is also being interviewed and with consent from that parent/ guardian. Feedback from participants under 18 is sought to provide a representative sample of age ranges and to assist with understanding the experiential effects of performance on those of a younger age.

Data or information to be collected, and the use that will be made of it:

Information will be collected through short face-to-face interviews carried out before performances, during intervals and after performances. Responses will be audio recorded and later transcribed.

In the event that written consent cannot be obtained at outdoor interviews for practical reasons, the participant will receive a copy of this form with the researcher's contact details, while verbal consent will be audio-recorded at the start of the interview.

Information will be used solely in the context of this doctoral project. Audience members will remain anonymous and will be given alternative names within the writing.

How will the information supplied by participants be stored?

The material collected will be stored on my personal computer and backed up on an external hard drive.

Contact for further questions:

Evelyn O'Malley
University of Exeter
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Contact in the case of complaint or unsatisfactory response from the above named:

Dr Zoë Boughton
Ethics Officer, College of Humanities
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Department of Modern Languages
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Z.C.Boughton@exeter.ac.uk

Consent:

I voluntarily agree to participate, and agree to the use of my data for the purposes specified above. I can withdraw consent at any time by contacting the interviewer.

Note: Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data.

Printed name of participant:

Signature of participant:

Preferred contact - email or telephone:

Signature of researcher:

One signed copy to be retained by the researcher, and one by the participant.

APPENDIX TWO

Ethics Approval Certificate



COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

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CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Academic Discipline: Drama

Title of Project: Outdoor Shakespeares: a study of how environment influences reception and performance aesthetics in open-air Shakespeare productions in the UK

Name(s)/Title(s) of Project Research Team Member(s): Evelyn O'Malley

Project Researcher's Contact Details (email and telephone no.):

eo230@exeter.ac.uk; +44 (0) 7734935574

Supervisor: Dr. Cathy Turner +44 (0) 1392 724529, ext. 2426; C.Turner@exeter.ac.uk

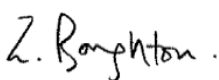
Brief Description of Project:

This project aims to demonstrate how performances of Shakespeare in outdoor settings interact with their environment and how the environment shapes audience experience. Interviews with audience members will take place between April and September 2013. Participants under 18 may also be consulted if they are present with a parent/ guardian who is also being interviewed and with consent from that parent/ guardian. Information will be collected through short face-to-face interviews which will be audio recorded and transcribed. If written consent cannot be obtained at outdoor interviews for practical reasons, the participant will receive a copy of the form, while verbal consent will be audio-recorded at the start of the interview. Other invited participants are actors and creative practitioners. Data will be collected in the form of face-to-face interviews which will be audio recorded (with the written consent of the participants) and/ or written notes will be taken. Practitioners will be named in full and cited within the writing. Participants may also be invited to participate in a focus group and invited to complete the "Connectedness to nature scale" at the beginning of their rehearsal process and later during the run. The responses to this questionnaire will be presented anonymously.

This project has been approved for the period

from: May 2013

to: September 2015

Signature 

Date: 26 September 2013

(College Ethics Officer)

Name/Title of Officer (BLOCK CAPITALS): DR ZOE C. BOUGHTON

APPENDIX THREE

Semi-structured interview

This is the interview template for short semi-structured face-to-face interviews with audience members, asking questions about how the outdoor environment and particular place of performance contribute to their overall experience.

Interviewers will adopt a friendly, informal physicality and conversational tone of voice to ensure the participants feel respected and safe. Audience members will be invited to participate as individuals or in small groups (friends, families, couples etc.). They will be free to terminate the interview at any time and the data will be destroyed.

Hello, I am assisting with research as part of a doctoral research project at Exeter University. It looks at how outdoor environments contribute to audience's experience of Shakespeare. We're talking to audience members to ask them about their experiences. The questions will take five to ten minutes to answer. Would you like to participate?

If I have your permission, may I record the interview?

I have a form here for you to take away with more information about the project and my contact details should you have any questions. It also explains that the information will only be used in connection with this research project and that you will remain anonymous in the writing. If you would like to end the interview without reason at any moment, we can do so.

- a. Can I confirm that you are happy to participate? Or

Do you have any questions for me?

Preshow

1. What appealed to you about this event?
 - a. How important was the venue itself to your coming this evening?
 - b. How important was the choice of the particular play? Shakespeare?
2. Have you been to this venue before?

Yes: What was it that made you come back? What can you remember about the occasion?

No: What are your first impressions of the space? Have you been to an outdoor Shakespeare here/ anywhere else before? If so, what can you remember about the occasion?
3. How far have you travelled to get here?
 - a. On holiday or local?

4. How have you prepared/ did you prepare for the surroundings?
 - a. What have you brought/ did you bring with you? Picnic/ rain gear/ sunglasses/ blankets?
5. How would you describe this space and environment to someone that had never been here?

That's all of the questions that I have. Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experience?

Interval/ Post-performance

1. What did you make of the performance?
2. How would you describe the atmosphere in the audience? What factors gave rise to that kind of atmosphere?⁶⁶
3. How would you describe the physical experience of attending a performance here?⁶⁷
4. Was there any particular moment during the performance where you felt the play related to the environment here?
5. Do you think that being an audience member here is a passive experience?⁶⁸ If not, how do you think that interaction is called for?
6. Thinking about the experience as a whole, how would you describe the thoughts and feelings you had as you watched the performance?⁶⁹
7. What were the most memorable parts of the performance for you this afternoon/ evening for you?
8. Is there anything else at all that you would like to add about your experience?

Following the first year's fieldwork, I added the following questions to the interview.

1. In what ways, if any, do you think the environment contributed to the performance?

⁶⁶ From Independent Theatre Council (2005) *Capturing the Audience Experience: A Handbook for the Theatre*, p.52.

⁶⁷ From Woods, P. (2010) *Globe Audiences: Spectatorship and Reconstruction at Shakespeare's Globe*, p.351.

⁶⁸ From Woods, P. (2010) *Globe Audiences: Spectatorship and Reconstruction at Shakespeare's Globe*, p.351.

⁶⁹ From Independent Theatre Council (2005) *Capturing the Audience Experience: A Handbook for the Theatre*, p.52.

2. How would you describe the relationship between the play and the environment we are in?
3. Can you recall any particular moments where you felt the play related well to the environment?
 - a. What do you think caused these moments?
4. What, if anything, do you think the performance does for the environment?
5. What do you think is particular to being at *performance* outdoors that is different to kinds of other outdoor activities?
6. In what ways do you think Shakespeare contributes to the experience?

APPENDIX FOUR

Table of interviews cited in the thesis.

PLACE	DATE	PLAY	NAMES	Pr e	Pos t	Interv al
The Willow Globe	25/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Ursula, Peggy & Barbara	X		
The Willow Globe	25/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Naomi	X	X	
The Willow Globe	25/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Nathan	X		
The Willow Globe	25/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Maura		X	
The Willow Globe	25/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Amanda		X	
The Willow Globe	25/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Mark		X	
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Jane & Paul		X	
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Ben Aires		X	
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Jennifer & 2 children	X	X	
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Simon & Dan	X		
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Megan		X	
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Dot		X	
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Mel & Trevor	X		
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Georgia & Selwyn	X		
The Willow Globe	26/05/2013	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Matt		X	
Minack	06/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Steve & Patsy	X		
Minack	06/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Flo & Ryan			X
Minack	06/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Mike, Joe & Conor			X
Minack	06/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Adrian		X	
Minack	06/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Jack		X	
Minack	06/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	James		X	
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Dan & Hazel	X		
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	John			
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Kellie		X	
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	David			
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Giles		X	
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Clare & Sophie	X		
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Hilary		X	
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Sarah		X	
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Robert		X	
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Laura & Richard	X		
Minack	07/06/2013	<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	Nicola			X
Brandon Hill	06/07/2013	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Sam & Laura			X
Brandon Hill	06/07/2013	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Martin & Mary			
Brandon Hill	06/07/2013	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Phoebe		X	

Brandon Hill	06/07/2013	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Kim & Chris		X	
Brandon Hill	06/07/2013	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Lisa, Philippa & Rob		X	X
Greenway	15/07/2013	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Anne & Brendan			X
Barking Park	18/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Tina	X		
Barking Park	18/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Izzy		X	
Barking Park	18/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Mel			
Barking Park	18/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Stacy & Millie		X	
Barking Park	18/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Elliot		X	
Barking Park	18/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Noelle, Emily & Melissa		X	
Barking Park	18/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Nora		X	
Barking Park	18/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Sophie, George & Neve		X	
Holland Park	25/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Jenny		X	
Holland Park	25/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Freya & Laura		X	
Holland Park	25/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Harry, Lucy & Kirsty	X		
Holland Park	25/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Bella & Jenny	X		
Holland Park	25/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Samia	X		
Holland Park	25/07/2013	<i>After The Tempest</i>	Coral & Dave		X	
Cucking-Stool Mead	22/08/2013	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Kaz		X	
Cucking-Stool Mead	22/08/2013	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	Francis		X	
Minack	13/09/2013	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Mark		X	
Minack	13/09/2013	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Sam		X	
Minack	13/09/2013	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Dawn		X	
Minack	13/09/2013	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Hattie			X
Minack	13/09/2013	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Rachel			X
Minack	13/09/2013	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Tara	X		
Minack	13/09/2013	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Eileen & Chris		X	
Minack	13/09/2013	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Maria		X	
Cyfarthfa Castle	14/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Mona, Donna & Lynn		X	
Cyfarthfa Castle	14/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Jess		X	
Cyfarthfa Castle	14/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Gwyn		X	
Cyfarthfa Castle	15/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Cheryl		X	
Thompsons Park	17/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Beth & Jess		X	
Thompsons Park	18/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Tracy		X	
Thompsons Park	18/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Dale		X	
Thompsons Park	18/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Sarah & Tim		X	
Thompsons Park	18/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Chantelle		X	
Thompsons Park	18/06/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Holly		X	
The Willow Globe	22/06/2014	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Richard		X	
The Willow Globe	22/06/2014	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Lizzie & Alice		X	
The Willow Globe	22/06/2014	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Thomas		X	
The Willow Globe	22/06/2014	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Charlie			X
The Willow Globe	22/06/2014	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Jane & Barbara		X	

The Willow Globe	22/06/2014	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Winnie		X	
Minack	02/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Deirdre & Gerry		X	
Minack	02/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Olivia		X	
Minack	02/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Sabina		X	
Minack	02/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Owen		X	
Minack	02/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Brian		X	
Minack	02/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Ian		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Jennie			X
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Ben & Mary		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Rosie		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Nicolette		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Danielle		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Lucy		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Paul		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Peter		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Kathy & Arun		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Ana		X	
Minack	03/07/2014	<i>The Tempest</i>	Harry		X	
Ripley Castle	05/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Liam		X	
Ripley Castle	05/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Adam		X	
Ripley Castle	06/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Charlotte & William		X	
Ripley Castle	06/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Carmel		X	
Ripley Castle	06/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Alex & Joey		X	
Ripley Castle	06/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Rachel		X	
Ripley Castle	06/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Rose & Ashley		X	
Ripley Castle	06/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Klara		X	
Ripley Castle	06/07/2014	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Lyra		X	
Blaise Castle	20/07/2014	<i>As You Like It</i>	Kelly		X	