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CREATIVE PLACEMAKING WITH A UNIVERSITY ARBORETUM

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by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that place is an agent in the construction of meaning and in social interactions and experiences of communities. This study seeks to understand placemaking as undertaken by a university theater-arts community and examines how the arboretum in which they perform becomes an agent in the community members’ learning. By studying an established community of practice, the scope of this study is unique in that it traces the emergence of a placemaking community from its inception across seventeen years of activity. The university arboretum setting serves as an important case study of placemaking in higher education because the arboretum is quite different from other spaces within the campus proper. Often learning spaces are siloed into specific buildings and segregated by disciplines. However, the study presents a case of a university learning space that is not discipline bound. Through a community of practice frame, the dissertation broadly asks; how does the community engage with, imagine across, and align and inscribe practices with the arboretum as a learning partner. Poststructural orientations based on the work of Deleuze and Guattari are used to explore enactive, embodied, and more-than-human approaches to learning with place. Various ethnographic methodological approaches are utilized along with forms of creative mapping. The dissertation advances theory by using the concept of meshworks and applies it to placemaking to investigate how people inhabit and make their own places of learning. The work advocates for and adds to the use of methods and techniques aligned with sensory ethnography as well as the collection and analysis of affective and non-representational data.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Place is more than the setting for learning. This dissertation shows that place is also an agent in the construction of meaning and in the social interactions and experiences of learning communities. This study contributes to placemaking research using a case from higher education. From this unique case I offer a new theoretical orientation by focusing on the imaginative, collaborative, and embodied ways that people learn with and construct place. Although studies of place-based learning and environmental education have examined the curricular implications and interdisciplinary impact on learners, (Sarbin 1983; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Gruenewald, 2002; Gruenewald & Smith 2014) there exists a lack of robust theory on how students and other university stakeholders create, design, and discover their own places of learning. Furthermore, this study calls for universities to consider more closely the utility of their nontraditional learning spaces, especially outdoor, public spaces.

Research Purpose

My study speaks broadly to those who are interested in place’s effect on learning, particularly designers and theorists of place-based learning and learning spaces. This inquiry adds to learning theory by providing a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between placemaking and learning adjacent to the university as well as contributing to research on informal learning (Erstad & Sefton-Green, 2013; Glastra, Hake & Schedler, 2004) and communities of practice (Wenger, 2010). Therefore, this inquiry is also useful to educators and leaders in higher education interested in community development and interdisciplinary learning.

I define placemaking as the active and intentional ways people demarcate, communicate, and inhabit places. When people make place together, they engage in shared discourse(s), common materials or design dynamic and shared social models (Mulcahy, Cleavland & Aberton, 2015). Place, or more specifically, the performance of place as relational, dynamic, and emergent may provide alternatives to
mainstream educational practices and goals (Ellsworth, 2005; McFarlane, 2010; 2011). For example, Fettes and Judson connect literacy and identity practices of school-aged children with the imaginative engagement of outdoor spaces and ecological placemaking. They found place and its semiotic resources to be pedagogical entry points that supported various modes of thinking (2010). Therefore, placemaking as a lens in education research widens the traditional scope of where and when learning happens, and with what.

This study seeks to understand placemaking as undertaken by a university arts community, by examining how the arboretum in which they perform becomes an agent in the community’s learning. The performance-based learning activities, diverse membership, and the community’s unique partnership with the arboretum necessitated an equally eclectic use of theories and methods to study them. From this investigation, I propose new theoretical concepts and vocabulary for placemaking. Developing new theoretical concepts of placemaking has implications for both theory and practice. First, this study advances theory by using the concept of meshworks described by Ingold, (2007; 2011) and applies it to placemaking to investigate how people inhabit and make their own places of learning. Second, my use of cartographic activities adds to sensory (Pink, 2008) and emplaced ethnographic techniques (Hunter, 2012) and informs theory with new methodological approaches. Third, by studying an established community of practice rather than an intervention or single occurring experience, the scope of this study is unique in that it traces the emergence of a placemaking community from its inception. This study has a longitudinal force of more than seventeen years that speaks to how university spaces transform and are transformed by the learners who choose to dwell there. From this investigation, I propose a new theoretical orientation and vocabulary for placemaking.

The Spatial Turn in the Humanities and Education

The study of place is an emerging area of interest in the humanities, education, and the field of technology and draws from theories and research across these fields. Like the practice turn in education, which focuses on social constructivists’ views of participation and knowledge-building as metaphors for
learning, (Sfard, 1998) the spatial turn in the social sciences and the humanities parallels similar views of constructivist views of place.

According to theorists such as Lefbvre (1991), Massey (1994), and Soja (1989;1996), place is constituted by subtle and sophisticated kinds of participation and knowledge-building practices mediated by people’s relationship with the physical world and environment (Warf & Arias, 2009). For a historical example, consider the city on the Bosporus River. Referring to this city as ‘Constantinople’ evokes its western cultural roots. While its other moniker, ‘Istanbul’ speaks to the city's eastern and modern present. The Hagia Sophia, one of the city’s iconic landmarks, was once a church and is now a mosque. While certain practices and iconography within the building have changed as dictated by time and culture, the central purpose of the building remains the same—a holy place and destination of both tourists and pilgrims. Thus, questions such as naming and cultural orientation (Byzantine-western or Ottoman-eastern) are predicated on relations, perceptions, and beliefs rather than physical geography.

Consequently, how we ascribe ownership of and affiliation with places as spatial and cultural materiality is worthy of investigation, especially within an educational context. For example, a museum can be viewed as a space that houses beauty or knowledge. The same museum, however, can also be viewed as colonizing, exclusionary, or even an oppressive space, illustrating that learning spaces are not value-neutral. Place’s priority in research and theory building within the field of education is still under-utilized and under-studied, even though where people learn is inextricably entangled with what and how people learn, (Temple, 2008). Epistemologically, the rich vocabularies, metaphors, and theories of place help elucidate and support the goals of education (Gulson & Symes, 2007). Place provides an important lens to understand educational goals (Ellsworth, 2005; McInerney, Smyth & Down, 2011) and to examine the materiality of learning (Sørenson, 2009), the ways the environment shapes our tools and tool use (Ingold, 2013; 2011). Although in the social sciences there is discussion over the theoretical difference between space and place (Tuan, 1977) for consistency and ease of use and to avoid awkwardness of language in this study, I use the word “space” to refer to physical areas in general, while “place signifies
the concept of specifically named sites.

University Settings as Learning Spaces for Placemaking

The use and design of place in higher education suffers from being both under-researched and under-theorized (Strange & Banning, 2011; Boys, 2011; 2016; Harrison & Hutton, 2014). It is not pedagogically adequate to build, design, or inscribe places for people to study in; rather, we should seek to understand how university spaces can open up places that people learn with. Such places should afford rich interaction and sites of connected learning for students and faculty as well as the broader community. Concurrent with the need to recognize and invest in such learning places, is to need to build theory that accounts for the potential pedagogical address of place (Ellsworth, 2005). Learning how to navigate, design, or reconfigure the places in which learning takes place is an integral aspect of learner agency and lifelong learning (Ellis & Goodyear, 2016; Banks, 2007; Erstad & Sefton-Green, 2013). Therefore, extending the scope of places of learning requires us to understand how placemaking can invite and support learning that is both participatory and knowledge building in nature.

Learning-with-place. Despite the variety of learning space models, Ellis and Goodyear (2016) call for more research that bridges the “deep fracture” (p. 149) between two polar conceptualizations of university learning spaces: (1) infrastructures to be quantified and managed or (2) a tangle of relationships between learners, educators, and physical settings. What I mean by tangle is that as collections of materials, learning spaces are neither passive or orderly. The properties and affordances of learning spaces influence the nature and quality of the learning interactions that happen within (and sometimes in spite of) their boundaries. The affective, social, and material qualities of place influence the kinds of interactions people have with things. Therefore, people and things (and by extension whole environments) are entangled in a complex web of enabling and constraining activity (Hodder, 2012).

Ellis and Goodyear suggest that much higher education research adopts a goal-oriented perspective towards learning spaces. Spaces are often conceptualized around what tools they house. In
turn, tool and artifact-making are similarly studied from a rationalist, goal-oriented perspective (2016). This outcome-based approach tends to be either place-agnostic or to view place as a backdrop for learning, a space that students learn in. Place-agnosticism and place as setting exemplify a learning-in-place assumption. What the field of higher education needs is a theoretical framework of place that conceptualizes people's interactions as embodied and emergent, learning-with-place.

A learning-with-place perspective focuses placemaking activities on those that “bring forth intentions” (Ellis & Goodyear 2016, p.181) rather than a pre-determined linear path to outcomes and objectives (Ingold 2007, 2013; Goodyear & Carvalho, 2013; Ellsworth, 2005). This approach has resonance in Dewey’s work (1930), which calls for broader design of ecological and cultural environments. Particular, rich, and varied environments are important because as Dewey argues, knowing comes about through “indefinite interactions” rather than those “that are fixed and complete.” These interactions are “capable of direction to new and different results through the mediation of intentional operations” (p. 17). Consequently, a learning-with-place approach includes intentional and meaningful ways that people demarcate and communicate where and how they play, learn, and work. From a research perspective, a learning-with-place approach rejects human goals as the only lens to view activity and agency. Rather, it attempts to show learning as a result of a symmetrical interplay of humans and their material environments (Sørenson, 2009).

It is not only learners who are enabled or confined by spatial and environmental configurations, educational designers and educators are also subject to such influences (Caravahlo & Yeoman, 2018). Therefore, learning-with-place offers alternatives to a fixed notion of the university as one single place, a notion that carries assumptions about who does or does not belong there. Learning-with-place evokes a plural notion of universities as comprised of constellations or bundles (Massey, 2005) of learning spaces that are dynamic and that have multiple, culturally-derived meanings. Consequently, particular attention should be paid to how people learn as they discover and invent open places both physically and socially.
Placemaking and agency. Part of the role of educators, designers, and artists is to question the normative forces of education’s structure of agency, to ask how social spaces are formed and what purposes our educational places serve (LaFever, 2014). The residential university campus is a unique site for understanding how people’s conceptions of place, learning, and dwelling interact. Created to serve the communities they are situated in, public universities have diverse space/place resources such as student housing, historic buildings, museums, and agricultural or ecological holdings. As early as the 1970s, Whisant, a forerunner of higher education’s spatially focused student-centered learning, called for the opening up of the university as public community space. Arguing that universities are not just places to work but places to learn and live, Whisant urges universities to allow students “maximum autonomy in selecting their own living and learning arrangements” to “capitalize on student’s natural curiosity and joy of learning” (1971, p. 93).

Many of the spatial challenges that Whisant describes, such as learner diversity and agency remain for universities. The public university community is becoming more diverse. With more diversity comes a greater range of expectations and needs that require a broader repertoire of learning experiences. Such needs also put pressures on spaces that were designed in or replicate the values of a time of elite higher education (Ellis & Goodyear, 2016). Within an increasingly complex university organization, we need better theories to understand how we make meaning from and collaboratively create a sense of place. Such theories should invite educators to consider the role that imagination has to play in expanding the idea and institutional form of the university (Barnett, 2013). One way to accomplish this goal is to consider universities as socially constructed public places and therefore disrupt the perception that the structures and patterns of behavior there are natural and static (Toolis, 2017). Through creative and discovery-centered activities, university community members can be co-designers rather than passive consumers of place (Thomas & Rappaport, 1996).
Finding Oneself in Place: Dwelling at the University

This study takes a literal approach to Barnett’s invitation of imagination in shaping learning places in higher education (2013). It examines how a community uses the materiality of a university’s arboretum to create and discover immersive imaginary worlds. It also explores how the arboretum shapes and is shaped by the community’s placemaking. The subject of this study is a community of performers collectively called Shakespeare in the Arb (SITA). The community is made up of amateur performers who stage a Shakespeare play in a university arboretum, affectionately known as the “Arb.” The origins of this investigation stem from my own experience as a college student. As a member of the SITA community, I developed a sense of belonging and ownership of the university. I chose to return to this place-based community because it is diverse in membership, pedagogically rich, and community driven. The Arboretum represents a public space that is connected with institutions of higher education but is often overlooked as a learning space on par with academic buildings or technologically enhanced classrooms.

SITA and the Arboretum serves as an important case study of placemaking in higher education because the Arboretum is a unique space, quite different from other spaces within the campus proper. Often on a college campus disciplines are siloed into specific buildings that house offices, labs, and classrooms. However, the Arboretum presents a case of a university learning space that is not discipline bound. Instead, the Arboretum offers the capacity for people to design learning spaces and in terms of SITA, develop their own place-knowledge. I argue that SITA’s placemaking is a pedagogical initiative, which is achieved by drawing people to the Arboretum and continually influencing how people observe their surroundings, make meaning, and imaginatively engage with place. Furthermore, understanding how such pedagogical placemaking unfolds becomes the focus of inquiry of this study.

Study context: Shakespeare in the Arboretum. The unique experience of Shakespeare in the Arboretum (SITA) comes from the environmental staging of the plays. There is no fixed stage; instead,
the audience follows the action through different locations in the Arboretum, often walking over a mile from beginning to end of the production. The staging takes advantage of the vistas and arrangements of the natural settings. The open spaces of the Arboretum become a panoramic stage, at once something both familiar and new.

![Shakespeare in the Arb.](image)

Figure 1-1: Shakespeare in the Arb. Production of *Midsummer Night’s Dream* with performers and audience members in the Heathdale valley.

Those who return yearly may recognize the same tree as a familiar landmark of the Arboretum; in one production the tree is rendered into a fairy haunt, while another year a palace gate or thieves’ hideout. As one critic commented, “The performers used the vastness of its Arb stage to full advantage, making entrances from behind trees, appearing over rises and vanishing into the woods” (Ann Arbor Daily News). The experience blends community, student, and professional-style participation in a theatrical production with the ecology and environment of the Arboretum, providing dynamic educational value for participants. The early rehearsals begin when the weather is still cold, tree buds are closed tight, and there is openness to the landscape before the foliage fills out. Thus, during the subsequent weeks of the rehearsal process, performers become attuned to seasonal changes as a cold Midwest spring gives way to
full summer. Participants co-discover and co-design the space of the play, using their understanding of the text and the aesthetic affordances of the space.

**The Arboretum as a place of querencia through SITA.** People’s identities are bound up with place—where they have been and where they are going. Places that provide a sense of self, secure feelings of belonging and attachment to community and landscape are encompassed by the Spanish term, *querencia*. Sarbin defines *querencia* as the practice of people and animals to seek out the place where they were reared or to find a specific niche in which they feel comfortable and secure (1983). Educators, researchers, and designers have used the term to elucidate affective placemaking by exploring the physical and socio-cultural spaces (Huddleston, 2015) as well as in a more metaphysical sense. For example, Ault (2008) uses the concept of *querencia* to bring together ideas of physical places and disciplinary thinking as places of coherence. Within this frame, achieving *querencia* means developing both an "attachment to place" and a "satisfaction with thinking" (p. 618). I use both approaches, conceptualizing the Arboretum as a physical place of safety and belonging, but also one that also fosters a specific constellation of knowledge.

What has always fascinated me about SITA is how the experience pulls people in and keeps them coming back to the Arboretum in different capacities. For example, the majority of members were students and have gone on to pursue various professions or life trajectories as scientists, educators, health workers and now parents. Even when SITA members are no longer students, many of us remain linked to the program, co-directing, making costumes, or writing dissertations, for instance. Playing in the Arb (both in a dramatic and ludic sense) remains important to us as alumni and community members.

For more than seventeen years, SITA has been a source of joy and belonging for me and for the hundreds of people, both performers and audiences, who have participated in our placemaking. On returning to the Arb, I experience something more than nostalgia. It is the sense that in this place, I am witty and creative, safe, strong, and ready to share. My experience with SITA helped make the Arboretum into my own place of *querencia* and gave me a sense of belonging while finding myself in place. Surely,
SITA and the Arboretum is a unique laboratory and context in which to understand the creative ways people “make place” together. If we want to understand placemaking, its inherent pedagogies and affects, we must examine how learners not just occupy, but dwell in and inhabit places of learning (Temple 2008; 2009; Riddle & Souter 2012).

This study attends to the broader discussion of how universities can recognize, design and support learning spaces as “dwellings” or as places of *querencia*; learning spaces that people return to and seek out to learn, play, and work alongside one another. Although we may not inhabit learning spaces in the same ways we inhabit our homes, we should recognize that such places have as much nuance in function, affect, and ritual. Throughout this study, I refer to people who occupy university spaces as dwellers rather than inhabitants. I use this term because it does not distinguish between people who live on a university campus, namely students, and those who frequent or return to such spaces. To dwell can mean to stay or to tarry, which captures both the transience and permanence of university settings and campuses. Furthermore, to dwell can also mean to think deeply about something. We actively dwell on thoughts, memories, and sensations, therefore dwelling on a place means visiting it and even shaping it in our mind’s eye.

To carry out my study I use emplaced ethnographic methods (place-sensitive) to understand how the SITA community has developed their placemaking practices over time. I examine the SITA community’s lived experience and relationship with the Arboretum and what activities and meaning they create together.

**Theoretical Orientation**

Concurrent with the need to recognize and invest in open and dynamic learning spaces (Temple, 2008; Savin-Baden, 2007) is the need to build theory that accounts for relationships that all university stakeholders (students, staff, and community members) have with university spaces and potential pedagogies that occur in non-traditional learning experiences. This study builds on emergent theories of
placemaking by focusing on material and cognitive (Turnball, 2002; Whatmore, 2006) aspects of placemaking. I offer new theoretical concepts for placemaking and its relationship to learning that meets three key criteria: i. It supports reciprocal modes of place attachment and belonging, ii. It conceives of place as an active participant in peoples’ learning, iii. It treats placemaking as a series of creative acts. This study of placemaking focuses on the more-than-human aspects of learning (Marin & Bang, 2018) by asking how places themselves become active participants in learners’ social interactions and knowledge creation (Somerville, Power, & de Carteret, 2009). To develop my placemaking orientation, I draw upon poststructural theories and vocabularies of place and pedagogy. I adopt Ingold’s concept of meshwork (2011) to understand placemaking in terms of activity, movement, and meaning-making.

**Placemaking as meshworking: Building theory around university learning spaces.**

*Placemaking as meshworking* serves as my guiding theoretical and analytical contribution. Informed by poststructural philosophers like Deleuze & Guattari, Ingold’s concept of meshwork focuses on the impermanence of boundaries and environment. Organisms (including people) are bound up in a “zone of entanglement” as they move across the world (Ingold, 2007; 2011). Ingold uses the concept of meshwork as a metaphor for place, one that is emergent, dynamic and relational, which he contrasts to place as an interconnected but static network. Furthermore, Ingold’s anthropological work on movement and activity lends itself to elucidating the nuanced and emergent qualities of pedagogy and learning. For example, Engeström (2008) cites Ingold to describe the rhizomatic, mobile nature of connected, and collaborative learning.

Meshworking has applications to the field of education and learning to elucidate how people, other living things, materials, and the environment create more-than-human learning systems. Similarly, placemaking as meshworking provides a robust interdisciplinary theoretical and analytical framework for higher education and community learning. Specifically, placemaking as meshworking orientation has implications for expanding the scope of university and community spaces by providing a case for what happens when people create their own places of learning. This case also serves to illustrate a more
symmetrical relationship between a place of learning and the community it supports—where place is considered a learning collaborator.

**Research Questions**

- How do SITA members engage with the Arboretum as a physical-environmental space and as a member of the SITA community?
- How does SITA imaginatively engage with the Arboretum? How does the Arboretum support members’ creative activities and practices?
- What are the ways that SITA aligns and inscribes its placemaking praxis with the Arboretum? What is SITA’s placemaking praxis and how does it support continual dwelling and meaning-making in the Arboretum?

**Overview of Chapters**

Chapter Two is the literature review in which I draw from an eclectic mix of theorists and perspectives from various fields ranging from education, anthropology, and social geography. I situate my study within the research on placemaking in education. I provide a description of enactive, embodied, and more-than-human approaches to learning and situate these approaches within poststructural theories of space and activity. By synthesizing these approaches, I offer the term *agentful topography* to describe how the Arboretum is active in SITA members’ learning. Additionally, I offer and develop my guiding contribution, *placemaking as meshworking*.

Chapter Three describes my methods. First, I describe the theoretical underpinnings nested within poststructural approaches to research and how it guides my approach to practicing emplaced ethnography. Next, I describe the Arboretum, SITA participants, and the 2017 production, *The Tempest*. I also describe my positionality and emplaced researcher roles that informed my data collection and analysis. Last, I detail the study’s research design and data collection process.
Chapter Four is my first analytical findings chapter and answers the question; how do SITA members engage with the Arboretum? by using the analytical frames of thick places (Casey, 2001; Duff, 2010) and place attachment. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first examines participants’ relationship with the physical Arboretum, and the second part focuses on their relationship with the space as a SITA member. The latter analysis is presented through four case studies.

Chapter Five attends to the question, how do SITA members imaginatively engage with across the Arboretum? by using the analytical frame of creative cognitive processes (Eisner, 2002). This chapter examines the 2017 Tempest production in detail, examining theatrical conventions such as staging, costumes and music and explaining how they support SITA’s placemaking.

Chapter Six uses the theoretical and analytical framing of placemaking as meshworking to explore; how does the SITA community align and inscribe practices with the Arboretum. I visualize SITA’s placemaking practice as meshworking through layering meta-performance maps that trace various “lines” of SITA praxis. From this analysis I innovate new meshwork inspired theoretical concepts that inform placemaking.

Chapter Seven includes a summary of my analytical chapters and a discussion of my findings, which include a placemaking framework. Finally, I offer the implications and conclusion.
Chapter 2  
**Theoretical Orientation and Literature Review**

The study of placemaking is informed by theories from many disciplines. I draw from fields such as education, arts-based research, and social geography, as well as embodied and enactive approaches to cognition and activity. This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section situates placemaking within the place-based education and learning literature. It provides background on the ways people identify with, talk about, and learn with place. This first section includes identifying contexts and examples of placemaking. From these examples, I summarize the dimensions of placemaking and discuss its use and implications in education research and theory. The second section lays out my theoretical orientation, which draws together the epistemic traditions and vocabularies of enactive, embodied, and poststructuralist approaches to learning, activity, and environment. Together these approaches examine more-than-human learning systems which take into account people, their movement, and environment.

Here, I identify Ingold’s concept of *meshwork* as a unifying metaphor across the theoretical perspectives. The third section provides the rationale for studying placemaking with an agentful topography. I provide an in-depth exploration of placemaking as meshworking as my guiding theoretical and analytical contribution that aligns with the more-than-human perspective that agentful topographies demand. Adopting the metaphor of place as meshwork, and consequently, placemaking as meshworking allows me to deeply explore and understand the semiotic resources and relationships that learners have with place. The section ends with my theoretical rationale for using poststructuralist approaches and explanation of how it empowers me to weave together related perspectives from different fields. The fourth section applies placemaking as meshworking to my study’s context. I conclude with an overview of my research questions.

**Overview of Placemaking**

In this section, I explore various placemaking contexts with the understanding that the core elements and principles of placemaking remain the same, despite its context or application. Placemaking,
whatever its form, is a process of making after all—a gathering together of materials reconfigured into something else. Placemaking is generally described as patterns of living in a particular space that create structures of association, so they become affectively charged (Fleming, 2007; Thrift, 2004). The study of placemaking is interdisciplinary, drawing upon the sociocultural aspects of human activity and meaning-making along with geophysical studies of environment and biology (Soja, 1989; Ardoin, 2006; Casey, 2001; Tuan, 1977). Therefore, placemaking provides robust opportunities to integrate, innovate, and apply theories from different disciplines with far-reaching implications for educational research (Massey, 1991, 2005; Nespor, 2008; Toolis, 2017). For this study, I broadly define placemaking as the active and intentional ways people demarcate, inhabit, and communicate in places.

**Early placemaking.** The process of placemaking is not just about forming attachments to created and found objects in the material world, but rather understanding that people, their communities, and places mutually shape each other (Benson & Jackson, 2013). Even at an early age, placemaking is important to children and young people’s sense of well-being, health and agency (Duff, 2010; Sampson & Gifford, 2010), and imagination (Goodenough 2010; Fettes & Judson, 2010). It is instructive to look at children’s earliest placemaking behaviors to understand how people discover, create, and share their own places of learning (Sobel, 1990; Goodenough, 2010). For example, Cobb (1959) argued that children’s early placemaking tendencies arise from the need to “make a world in which to find a place to discover a self—" a stance that at the time ran counter to the general position that "self-exploration produces a knowledge of the world." (p. 504.). Cobb argues that children need the opportunity to create and manipulate small worlds. Materials with high plasticity that can be easily rearranged, moved, and shaped gives children the "opportunity to organize the world and then find places within it in which to become themselves" (Sobel, 1990, p 8). Hence, the creation of forts, tree-houses, and hide-aways demonstrate the imaginative placemaking and world-making behavior of children, which is integral to their identity and development. “However humble the container,” such childhood places endure in the memory of adults and elucidate where and how placemaking activities continue into adulthood (Goodenough, 2010 p. 3).
These acts of early placemaking, such as creating forts and tree houses help to distinguish a sense of self by creating or discovering places where children come to learn what already is—in a way that we learn what can be changed (Winnicott, 1971; Ellsworth, 2005).

Building on Cobb’s work, Sobel’s investigation of adults’ memories of their secret spaces of childhood yields principles of “special places,” including safety, ownership, creativity, and agency (1990). However, it is not surprising that these qualities of place describe both special places of childhood and *querencia*, the seeking out of safe and familiar spaces. The impulse to seek out special places and similar placemaking behaviors of children are not all that different for young adults, especially during the time of maturation in the university context (Chow & Healey, 2008; Holton, 2015). The placemaking activities of young adults center on first apartments, dorm rooms, and living on one’s own. Therefore, extending placemaking to include intense dwelling at a university has implications of academic citizenship and belonging. Young people’s world-building at the university can be understood as finding ownership and belonging with an academic discipline as well as in a domestic/community sense (living in the dorm, attending or being a fan of university sports, etc.) At the same time, placemaking in university contexts takes on an intuitional focus by exploring the relationship of the university and the larger community (Nørgård, & Bengtsen, 2016).

**Community placemaking.** While placemaking can encompass people’s private or individual relationships with place, it is more often studied as a public and collaborative activity—a vehicle to design and support public and community resources. According to Markusen & Gadwa (2010), placemaking is viewed as a bottom-up, asset-based, person-centered process. Placemaking within a community context is viewed as a grassroots movement to understand and utilize local resources such as physical environment and local cultural practice. Therefore, placemaking becomes a collaborative and participatory civic activity for people with the goal of improving the livability of public and community spaces. Based on the community context, Markusen & Gadwa argue that placemaking presents an opportunity for civic engagement, and inclusive and transformative dialogue (2010).
**Critical placemaking.** One way to engage in more inclusive dialogue is through a critical theoretical approach to place and placemaking. A critical placemaking orientation asks people to develop and examine a sense of place identity through invisible and visible spatializing of power that constructs personal and community narratives (Toolis, 2017; Ball & Lai, 2006). Therefore, critical placemaking advocates for topics of social and restorative justice, public health, and wider political implications. Rock (2012) provides an example of critical applications of placemaking by examining Detroit’s urban farming and garden initiatives as a response to long-standing issues of blight and health effecting Detroit residents. During the economic recession of 2009, the city’s vacant land rose to 30 percent at the same time the city’s poorest residents were living in “food deserts” or lack of access to fresh food. One way the city re-appropriated space was to set up urban farming collectives. Part of this initiative included drawing upon traditional agricultural knowledge within the Black community. Therefore, critical placemaking allows for deterritorializing and reterritorializing—the dismantling of master narratives or structures of place to create a new narrative through remembering stories, people, and environments that were previously invisible or mute (Toolis, 2017).

**Creative placemaking.** What has been deemed ‘creative placemaking’ integrates arts into fields that impact communities, as well as using the arts and local creative cultural practices to help engage communities and solve issues within them (Graham, 2007; Markusen & Gadwa 2010). The arts have always been seen as a way to disrupt and challenge power and dominant narratives — place is no exception. For example, the city of Tucson implemented the PLACE Initiative (People, Land, Arts, Culture Engagement), which funded over 50 different projects over a three-year period. Examples of sponsored projects included holding festivals that used music and dance to raise awareness for diabetes and health (Tucson Pima Acts Council, 2013). By combining movements in the arts and urban community building, critical and creative placemaking approaches have been viewed as a counterpoint to trends of privatization and gentrification (Project for Public Spaces, 2016; Maton, 2008). Consequently,
placemaking as civic engagement has drawn interest in revitalizing public spaces such as libraries, parks, and public performances (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Melhuish, 2015).

**Placemaking in Education Research**

Placemaking is increasingly described as a context for inclusive and transformative dialogue around the design and use of public educational spaces (McInerney, *et al.*, 2011; Martin, 2003). As a learning activity, placemaking is both participatory and knowledge-building in nature because when people make place together, they engage in shared discourse(s), common materials or design dynamic and shared social models (Mulcahy, Cleveland & Aberton 2015). Lastly, placemaking provides an opportunity for agency as individuals and communities actively create the spaces and activities they wish to inhabit. For example, Clark and Utzell’s (2002) analysis of adolescents’ placemaking and their perceived place-affordances of school, town, and home illustrates young people’s need for both public spaces of social interaction and belonging and private areas of retreat and safety.

Placemaking within an educational context shares and extends many of the characteristics of critical and creative placemaking (Graham, 2007) such as the use of public learning spaces to support communities and public pedagogies concerning the environment and engaged citizenship (Bedoya, 2013; Biesta 2012; 2014). For example, in their study of learning spaces in higher education, Swist and Kuswara (2016) define placemaking as a multilayered process that unfolds from the lived experience that emerges from activities within a system and associated affordances. Fettes and Judson (2010) use the theoretical construct of cultural tools to connect the literacy and identity practices with the psychosomatic imaginative engagement of placemaking in school-aged children. These examples illustrate that placemaking within an educational frame brings together the complementary public/private needs of young people to support their development—places where they feel secure enough to learn—and places where they can explore and share their learning with others.

Placemaking also extends into discussions of bridging physical and virtual spaces such as computer games (Barab, Dodge, Tuzun, Job-Sluder, Jackson, Arici, Heislet, 2007; De Souza, Sliva &
Hjorth, 2009; Sørenson, 2009) and hybrid workspaces such as university libraries and computer labs (Bilandzic & Johnson, 2013; Ellis & Goodyear, 2016; Hung & Stables, 2011). Furthermore, placemaking informs aspects of user-centered design like agency, by using student input to design learning spaces (Harrup & Turpin, 2013). For example, Ehret and Hollett (2016) examine the ongoing social shaping of place and its affect that generates and maintains youths’ sense of belonging. Ehret and Hollet extend the roles of both placemaking and students as participatory design subjects by calling for more attention to the affective dimensions of placemaking rather than cultural mediation alone. Therefore, placemaking becomes a lens to understand where people learn, what they bring with them, and how they feel while they are there.

**Situating placemaking within place-based learning and place-based education.** This study’s conceptualization of placemaking is informed by place-based learning and place-based education literature, which focus on how people identify with, talk about, and learn from place. Place-based environmental education literature draws heavily from theories of place-identity and place-attachment and advocates for multidisciplinary, experiential, and intergenerational modes of learning that contribute to the larger community (Gruenewald, 2002, 2003; Lewicki, 1998; Smith, 2002; Theobald & Curtiss, 2000; Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, Hess, 2007). Place-identity is the way people identify with the environmental and material world. Made from people’s memories, ideas, feelings, and attitudes, place-identity relates to the variety and complexity of physical settings that make up day-to-day existence. Therefore, place identity can encompass notions of “where you are from” or identities of ownership, belonging, or otherness in relation to one’s physical settings (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983).

Embedded within place-identity is place-attachment or the meaning-making that individuals engage in with their environments (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). People's identities, biographies, and histories shape how they sense and construct places through a process that is “a fusion of perception and imagination” (Streibel, 1998 p. 423). Thus, the way people engage in dialogue with and about place can support learning that fosters connectedness with the more-than-human material world and ecological
citizenship (Orr, 2002; Verran, 1998). Dialoguing with place involves discursive processes, connections, and reciprocal meaning-making from memories, experience, and imagination, and so place-based dialogues provide the foundation for developing an awareness of place and self (Hunter, 2012).

Pedagogies of place view the question “who are we?” as intimately bound with “where are we?” (Sarbin, 1983; Dixon & Durheim 2000). These two questions propose a succinct heuristic to explore the multiple dimensions of ecological and cultural analysis evoked by the study of place. As a result, place-based pedagogies aim to identify, recover, and create material spaces that teach us how to dwell fully in our environments (Sobel 2004; Greuenwald, 2004). Critical place-based pedagogies challenge dominant narratives, revealing the ways that people and places are exploited (Greuenwald, 2004). Taking this holistic, integrated approach to place asks educators to reflect on the relationships between the kind of educational experiences we create and support and those we pass on for future generations (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). At the same time, educational research, theory, and practice have been slow to consider the role of place in meaning-making and as a constituent part of people’s learning, identity, and ultimately, perception of the material world. (Sobel, 2004; Gruenwald, 2003; Nespor, 2008).

**Placemaking as a lens in education research.** Placemaking as a lens in education research widens the traditional scope of where and when learning happens, and with what. Placemaking also shares important dimensions with critical pedagogies. Thus, discussions of placemaking contain theoretical, political, and pedagogical dimensions of i.) agency, who/what gets to occupy the space and how they may behave, ii.) spatial-temporal, the boundaries, borders, and duration that make up and in turn dissolve places, iii.) the affective dimensions of place, how does the place feel and what kinds of memories, emotions, sense of belongingness and ownership does it evoke, iv.) mobilities and movement, v.) the socio-material, the material objects, geophysical and organic bodies as well as the communities and relationships that are supported and take place there, and the vi.) constitutive, how/what are the mechanisms that constituted or co-fabricate place. All together, these dimensions provide a holistic and nuanced lens to understand how people and place are mutually shaped.
Despite placemaking's wide application to both formal and informal learning contexts, researchers and educators lack the theory and methods to explain how placemaking happens and identify its pedagogical signs (Melhuish, 2011). Furthermore, there is little empirical evidence to help us understand what forms of imaginative, collaborative, and embodied placemaking take in educational contexts. For these reasons, more investigations of long-term placemaking are needed to understand how people discover, create, and share their own places in which they both learn and dwell (Huang & Stables, 2011; Bonnett, 2007).

**Theoretical Orientations**

In this second section, I foreground my study of placemaking using several related disciplines and theoretical orientations. Embodied and enactive approaches to cognition and learning posit that meaning-making is distributed across dynamic system(s). These approaches also support the expansion of learning collaborators to more-than-human partners. Embodied, enactive, and more-than-human approaches emerged and are informed by other theoretical orientations such as Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 1987), posthumanism (Haraway, 2008; Barad, 2007), and poststructuralism (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Massumi, 2002). Drawing from this rich body of theory, I argue that the Arboretum is an agentful topography for the SITA community members, meaning that the Arboretum is a collaborator in SITA’s learning and social interaction.

**Embodied and enactive approaches to cognition and learning.** Cognition is rooted in how people sense the world—how the body interacts and responds to the physical environment. (Gallagher, 2005; Thrift, 2004). Embodied learning, therefore, focuses on sensing, meaning-making and knowledge building through bodily activity (Clark & Chalmers, 1998; Clark, 2008). As cognizant organisms, humans selectively create our environment through our contact with and shaping of our worlds (Thompson, 2010; Rowland, 2010). Consequently, intentions are not predefined but rather structured by cognition and action, meaning that intentions emerge from the synergy of shifting actions and new insights. Enactive
approaches to learning focus on the extended, intersubjective, and socially situated nature of thinking and learning systems (Gallagher & Lindergren, 2015; Fuchs, & De Jaegher, 2009). Similarly, enactive perspectives view cognition as being formed through a dynamic interaction between organisms and their environment. Enactive and embodied approaches are complementary, demanding that educators, researchers, and designers understand and account for people's relationship with the places they inhabit and the relationship between their activities and their environment.

**Expanding learning partners to more-than-human systems.** A more-than-human approach to learning broadly posits that social interactions, along with doing and making, are not exclusively human activities. If cognition is not an activity that resides only in the brain, and if people are bound together with their environment and fellow organisms, then more-than-human (MTH) perspectives emphasize ‘livingness’ as a product of the connectedness between bodies (including human bodies) and the geophysical world (Whatmore, 2006; Metzger, 2014).

Adopting a more-than-human approach demands shifting analytical, ontological, and methodological perspectives (Whatmore, 2006). Related to the 'practice turn' within social sciences and education, a more-than-human approach centers analytic focus and social agency on embodied practice and performance (Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Ingold, 2011; Sørenson, 2009). Additionally, such an approach focuses on affect rather than meaning, redirecting modes of inquiry to include “the rich array of the senses, dispositions, capabilities and potentialities of all manner of social objects and forces assembled through, and involved in, the co-fabrication of socio-material worlds” (Whatmore, 2006, p. 604). For example, Marin and Bang (2018) adopt a more-than-human approach as a complement to indigenous knowledge, walking, reading, and storying land as a context for knowledge building.

In summary, enactive approaches acknowledge the influence and the interdependent relationship between people and their environment. Embodied approaches explore the ways people move through and sense the world, while a more-than-human approach expands socio-material partners that can help to support learning and belonging. The theoretical orientations described above are influenced by
poststructuralist vocabularies and metaphors so that place is treated as performative, open-ended, multiple, practiced, and embodied. To think about place in this way requires a shift from nouns to verbs—from place to placing—and requires a shift in theoretical language and methods (Beyes & Steyart, 2007). Foucault provides the basis for this shift by “arguing that instead of defining place in closed terms of stasis, representation, and reification, it is more productive to adopt a different set of vocabularies such as capacities and forces; rhythms and flows; instincts, affects; knots and assemblages” (1986, p. 47).

Therefore, poststructural orientations foreground placemaking as emergent actions and dynamic relations aligned with embodied, enactive, and more-than-human approaches to environment, activity and learning. This study takes both an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach to placemaking informed by overlapping the enactivist, embodied, and more-than-human approaches to learning to elucidates place’s pedagogical agency (see Figure 2-1).

![Figure 2-1](image-url)

**Figure 2-1**: Enactive, embodied, and more-than-human perspectives informing learning and placemaking. This study situates placemaking and the inherent learning through such activities within these three related approaches.

Consequently, the analytical focus of this study is concerned with placemaking praxis that is ongoing, affectively charged (Thrift, 2004) and focused on the social agency of human and non-human collaboration.
Agentful Topographies: Place as an Agent in Peoples’ Learning

Agentful topographies emerge when learning spaces become active participants in learners’ social interactions and knowledge creation. The relationship between place and learning is theoretically and qualitatively different when learning is conceived of as participation or knowledge building, rather than simply knowledge acquisition (Paavola, Lipponen & Hakkarainen, 2004; Sfard, 1998). The different metaphors for learning—acquisition, participation and knowledge building—carry with them implicit design principles and pedagogical signifiers that affect the relations between learning, place, tools, and artifacts (Goodyear et al. 2014; Engeström, 2008; Engeström & Sannino 2010). Mulcahy, Cleveland, and Aberton (2015) describe three characteristics that hold places of learning together: a shared vision and discourse; a design or material dynamic; and a shared social model. However, these characterizations of learning places remain solidly within human locus of agency and design. Therefore, to fully conceptualize places of learning as agentful topographies, it is necessary to have enactive and more-than-human approaches front-and-center rather than in the theoretical and analytical periphery. In this study, I attempt to study place not as a setting for human purposes but as a participant taking part in practice on a similar level with humans. Enactive and emplaced understandings of learning are in need of empirical examples that explore how particular tools, materials and spatial configurations can be said to support desired kinds of learning. Understanding place’s agency is partly accomplished by paying particular attention to the place’s materiality. As collections of materials (natural or otherwise) places are neither mute or passive and the affective, social, and material qualities of place influence the kinds of interactions human have with things. Carvalho and Yeomen (2018) call for a deep understanding between a.) pedagogy, place, and people and b.) theory, design, and practice. Citing the work of Hodder (2012, 2014) and Ingold (2011) they make a case for examining the socio-material studies of learning.

Places of learning “have distinctive qualities about them that ‘recruit’ or draw learners to them” (Leander, Phillips & Taylor, 2010, p. 336). It is not just the ability of place to draw people in, but place has a transformational force as well. This transformational force is what Ellsworth describes as place’s
pedagogical address, or put another way, how learners are called forth or invited to collaborate with the environment. Furthermore, Ellsworth describes this address as having “its own logics, materials, forms, and processes aimed at reforming what we think we know.” (2005, p. 37). Ellsworth analyzes designed spaces such as museums that are outside of traditional classroom models, arguing that places have their pedagogical force. Ellsworth argues that such places become pedagogical as people learn with the space through their architecture and design. Therefore, place’s pedagogical address provides theoretical support for agentful topographies.

In the context of this study, the Arboretum is an active participant in social interactions for the SITA community, a place that addresses or calls upon learners through various pedagogical forces. Placemaking activities bring forth intentions rather than a pre-determined linear path to outcomes and objectives (Ellis & Goodyear, 2016; Ingold 2011, 2013; Ellsworth 2005.) Accordingly, making places and using tools can be understood as widening the scope of cognition “beyond the skin” (Clark & Chalmers, 1998; Patterson, 2009) across complex hybrid orchestrations that span mind/body, physical and virtual spaces artifacts and tools (Clark, 2008; Massey, 2005; Duff, 2010). However, when conducting more-than-human inquiry that shifts analytical focus to affect, practice, and relational entanglement, finding appropriate methods can be difficult (Sørenson, 2009). Therefore, I utilize Ingold’s concept of meshwork to describe the emergent and embodied and more-than-human activity of SITA’s placemaking with the Arboretum.

**Placemaking as Meshworking: A Metaphor for Emergent Activity with Place**

*Placemaking as meshworking* serves as my guiding theoretical and analytical contribution and supports agentful topographies and its theoretical underpinnings. The concept of meshwork focuses on how organisms (including people) are bound up in a “zone of entanglement” with each other and other materials as they move across the world. Based on observations from Ingold’s field of anthropology, meshwork is similar to Engeström and colleagues’ description of knotworking as “rapidly pulsating, distributed and partially improvised orchestration of collaborative
performance between otherwise loosely connected actors and activity systems” (1999, p. 346-347). In his
description of “wildfire activities,” Engeström (2008) cites Ingold to describe the rhizomatic manner of
mobility and activity that form connected and collaborative learning. Ingold describes meshworks as the
following:

Each such trail is but one strand in a tissue of trails that together comprise the texture of
the lifeworld. This texture is what I mean when I speak of organisms being constituted
within a relational field. It is a field not of interconnected points but of interwoven lines;
not a network but a meshwork. (Ingold 2011, p. 69-70).

Figure 2-2: Ingold’s conception of meshwork (above) and network (below). Ingold distinguishes the
meshwork of entangled lines and the network of connected points.
Meshworks are distinguished from networks (see Figure 2-2) in that networks are made up of interconnected but static nodes and connections that can be “viewed all at once,” whereas a meshwork is a series of entangled knots “tied from multiple and interlaced strands of movement and growth.” (2007 p. 73). Where the lines of networks show the relations of connections to be applied, a meshwork is something to experience (my emphasis). The threads of a meshwork are positively tacky, having the ability to “catch, tangle and bind…and this ability gives them their power” (Murray-Rust, Tarte, Hartswood, & Green; 2015, p.114). Thus, a meshwork represents fluid, loosely bound elements with no beginning or end. Through the lens of meshwork, place is a negotiated, relational, and dynamic collection of materials and meanings. Broadly, Ingold’s meshwork concept can be used to understand the critical dimensions of placemaking such as agency, mobility, affect, etc., and is at once theoretically cohesive—being able to bring together the various aspects of theories together—as well as generative.

**Materials and spaces of learning as meshworks.** Before going further, I need to explain how meshworks provide an alternative configuration to how networks have been used previously to describe socio-material practices in education. To do this, I draw extensively from Sørenson’s work on the social-material entanglement of learning. Sørenson provides a critique of the network metaphor developed within Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Latour, 1999) to describe the structure, materiality, and behavior of the students and the designed online space of her study.

Sørenson in her book, *The Materiality of Learning: Technology and Knowledge in Education* (2009) provides an ethnomethodological account of 4th-grade students across their classroom and online environment. Like a jacket that is too tight—with no pockets, the network metaphor “didn’t quite fit,” the technological environment and was unable to account for the “failing, mutating, and collaborative relations” she observed. Her critiques are as follows: using a network metaphor takes “a managerial perspective,” a birds-eye view where all the components of a network can be viewed all at once. Next, a network’s telos is to achieve order and stability as well as tendency is to “draw things tightly together” and “aims at settling” components into an all-encompassing structure (p. 68). Thus, Sørenson argues that
a network metaphor is for “making a big stable and robust systems and for being incapable of describing assemblages that vary and do not settle” (p.68). Consequently, she concludes that the network metaphor was insufficient and partly misleading to describe what she and the students were experiencing. Sørenson “reconfigures” and offers several metaphors in addition to networks to describe socio-material configurations. One metaphor in particular, includes patterns of relations and fluidity, which become the defining characteristics of the meshwork metaphor. To be clear, Sørenson does not use the term meshwork, nor cite Ingold, yet I offer that meshwork is a strong candidate for one of the alternative learning metaphors that Sørenson was in the process of ‘feeling out.’

I view my study’s context, the Arboretum, as an analog version of the 3D game environment of Sørenson’s study. Furthermore, this study parallels Sørenson’s in several ways. First, Sørenson examines the interaction and worldbuilding activity of children in an online collaborative space as part of an after-school program. Both the online world and the Arboretum extend out of their institutional containers in messy and unexpected ways. Next, Sørenson uses a posthuman frame (Haraway, 2008; Barad, 2007), a stance that is closely related to a more-than-human approach and draws from similar feminist-materialist literature. Therefore, Sørenson’s study attempts to decenter human goals as the only way to understand activity and tools. And finally, Sørenson and I share an ontological focus of placemaking and how materials (in my case the Arboretum as bundles of materials and growths) participates and performs (enacts) pedagogically with the SITA community.

Equipped with the concept of meshworks and following Sørenson’s path, my study shifts from the network metaphor to meshwork in three related contexts. First, place as meshwork, as described by Ingold (2011), where travel is described wayfaring. Next, learning spaces, as meshworks (Michels & Beyes, 2014; Carvalho & Yeoman, 2018) that are defined by their multiplicity, relationality, and affect. Finally, my own contribution of placemaking as meshworking, which frames placemaking as a creative, emergent activity that connects human and non-human entities in a dynamic system.
Meshwork provides an alternative to the static node-connection approach that the field of education has used to conceptualize how people use tools to learn and work alongside one another to achieve their goals (Engeström, 2008; Edwards & Clark, 2002; Goodyear, Carvalho & Dohn, 2013; Fenwick, Edwards & Sawchuck, 2011). Meshworks do not dismiss the network metaphor but offer an alternative. Assuming that cognition is embodied and emergent means that activities like making and using tools bring forth intentions rather than proceeding orderly from goals to objectives. Consequently, learning spaces that are conceived as meshworks ultimately have different pedagogical forces than spaces that were designed using a network approach.

**Wayfaring: Movement in a meshwork.** Another way that Ingold distinguishes meshworks from networks is in terms of movement and mobilities—or wayfaring. Wayfaring yokes the concepts of moving and perceiving and is useful in exploring the dimensions of placemaking, particularly focused on mobilities, affect, and agency (Nolte, 2014; Hackett, 2016; Kelton, Ma, Rawlings, Rhodehamel, Saraniero, Nemirovsky, 2018). Wayfaring is partly drawn from the theories of de Certeau (1984) and helps describe the embodied, idiosyncratic, and everyday patterns of movement and path-making through place. Both Ingold and de Certeau view movement as a discursive act similar to storytelling as the trails made and the paths taken bind place together. Accordingly, Ingold interprets walking a path as a continual act of placemaking, a way of both knowing and sensing.

Ingold distinguishes movement through space as transport in a network. On the other hand, movement that *makes place*, is wayfaring in a meshwork. Wayfaring is sensual exercise aligned practices akin to hunting and gathering Ingold gives the counter-example of the march as a form of transport, which is both goal-driven and teleologic. Figure 2-3 provides examples illustrating the differences between wayfaring and transport by comparing the node and connector transport example of the New York subway compared to the foraging patterns of ants.
Figure 2-3: The subway map of Brooklyn as an example of transport in a network. A Subway map of New York exemplifies a network, a series of nodes and connections. Movement through a network is seen as transport, which is goal driven and teleologic.

Figure 2-4: The foraging patterns of ants as an example of wayfaring through a meshwork. Movement through a meshwork is emergent and responsive based on a multitude of actors. (Picture courtesy of AnTracks).

But wayfaring goes beyond describing people’s general movement. Adopting certain metaphors of learning (acquisition, participation, knowledge building) also changes the nature of how learners move through terrains of practice and therefore describes the tightly knit aspects of mobility and perception in learning. (Nolte, 2014; Hackett 2016). O’Neill and Hubbard argue that sharing in and attending to the paths traveled is useful as a means of understanding emplacement. Other studies look to movement through space
as primary meaning-making activities (Taylor & Hall, 2013; Powell, 2010; Ma & Munter, 2014.) Thus, movements such as walking, cycling, or skating open up paths and trails, storylines, and lines of inquiry that have pedagogical value. Plumb, for example, uses wayfaring to describe the pedagogical moves he views as fundamental to the field of adult education.

Learners are not still, like nodes in a network awaiting receipt of information. The world of learning is not a smooth surface upon which knowledge can be mapped and then moved around. Rather, learners are beings in motion constantly engaged in a process of enskillment that tunes their bodies and minds (surfaces in their own right) to the ever-transforming surfaces of the world” (2008 p. 286).

Ingold’s anthropological work on movement and activity lends itself to elucidating the nuance and emergent qualities of pedagogy and learning. Placemaking as meshworking then provides a robust, interdisciplinary theoretical and analytical contribution to place-based learning. At the same time SITA and the Arboretum provides a similarly strong example of place-based pedagogy in higher education and community learning. Furthermore, the meshwork concept provides a metaphor to understand socio-material studies of learning that encompass the enactive, embedded and more-than-human approaches already described. Therefore, by understanding place as a meshwork I can better explore relations between entities through which activity occurs or put another way, the activity that holds learning together. In my case meshworking enables me to explore how placemaking as a learning activity is made by the relations between the Arboretum and the SITA community.

**Meshworking in the Context of SITA**

I use meshworking to describe how the SITA community dwells in, learns, and builds a sense of belonging with place (the Arboretum). If place is conceived as a knot tied from multiple and interlaced strands (meshwork), then SITA’s placemaking (meshworking) with the Arboretum is the activity of adding threads, loosening some, and entangling others (Ingold, 2011). Meshworks help describe the fluid, relational patterns and collaborations that Sørenson explored, and fit well with the messy materiality of the Arboretum. Figure 2-5 illustrates how the approaches reviewed here create a flexible framework to understand and study the Arboretum and the SITA community.
Figure 2-5: Placemaking as meshworking; the theoretical and analytical lens of the study. Placemaking as meshworking supports both the contextual assertions or descriptions of the study’s particular community and place (SITA and the Arboretum) along with the theoretical orientations of enactive, embodied, and more-than-human approaches to learning and cognition.

At the center of this study (and consequently the diagram in Figure 2-5) is my guiding theoretical and analytical contribution—placemaking as meshworking. My guiding contribution elucidates my contextual assertions, that the Arboretum is an active force in SITA’s learning and that together they are bound by placemaking into a more-than-human system. The resources of more-than-human-systems such as talk, gesture, movement, tools, and environmental features that make up SITA’s performance, are under-explored in the literature (Marin & Bang, 2018). Building on the work of educational researchers such as Bang & Marin (2015; 2018) and Sørenson (2009), this dissertation aims to explore how resources offered by more-than-human-systems shape human activity.
Moreover, the placemaking explored in this study aligns with learning that is understood as participatory and knowledge building in nature (Sfard, 1998; Paavola, Lipponen & Hakkarainen, 2004). Meshworking as placemaking, in turn, provides a holistic metaphor that provides analytical purchase to enactive, embodied and more-than-human approaches to learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) call for a broad view of human agency to understand the various relational practices or “praxis” by “emphasizing the practice of agency, world and activity” (p. 50). However, I go further by examining the broad agencies of place (Arboretum) as a community member to understand how place initiates and shapes praxis. Furthermore, I examine how place can assert itself into human activity such as talk, gesture, artifact-making, and movement.

Placemaking is the shared practice that constitutes SITA as a community. Moreover, meshworking allows me to understand the Arboretum as a more-than-human community participant. Communities develop modes of belonging through engagement, imagination, and aligning and inscribing practices (Wenger 2010). Adding place as a “member” of communities is a novel approach. Consequently, applying frameworks originally created for human organizational activity and using them to study more-than-human communities provides a flexible but sturdy means of inquiry. Therefore engagement, imagination, and inscribing practices with the Arboretum as a community member provide entry points or areas of focus to structure my analysis.

Wenger (2010) describes engagement in a community as doing things together, talking, producing artifacts, “we learn what we can do and how the world responds to our actions.” Imagining means constructing images of ourselves and communities and the world to orient ourselves and explore possibilities. Alignment means making sure that individual practices are aligned with the larger group so that they are effective beyond an individual’s single engagement. Alignment is the mutual process of coordination of perspectives to reach a mutual outcome or goal, even if that goal is mostly ill-defined. Alignment is being attenuated to the rhythms, “both boisterous and subtle, of activities” (p. 229).
Inscribing attends to the physical marks of these practices on the environment or materials that members create, discover, pick up, or lay down.

Accordingly, I broadly ask how place shapes a community’s engagement, supports collective imagination across time and space, and provide the physical materials and conditions to align practices.

**Research Questions**

1. How do SITA members engage with the Arboretum as a physical-environmental space and as a member of the SITA community?
2. How does SITA imaginatively engage with the Arboretum? How does the Arboretum support members’ creative activities and practices?
3. What are the ways that SITA align and inscribe practices with the Arboretum? What is SITA’s placemaking praxis and how does it support continually dwelling and meaning-making in the Arboretum?
Chapter 3
Methods

Introduction

The methods section lays out how I use emplaced ethnographic methods in alignment with poststructural orientations to account for enactive, embodied, and more-than-human learning systems. Within emplaced ethnography, the place itself is considered of primary importance, where meaning-making with place is ever-present (Hunter, 2012). Building on poststructural conceptions of place, I start with the presumption that the Arboretum is an agentful topography, a dynamic environment that actively shapes social activity and learning and is therefore fundamentally enactive (Thompson, 2010; Fuchs, & de Jaegher, 2009; McGann, de Jaegher & DiPaolo 2013), and embodied (Thrift, 2004; Rowland, 2010; Clark, 2008). Additionally, my data explores how the physical and material environment of the Arboretum, and SITA as a place-based community, make up a more-than-human system of learning, doing, and being (Marin & Bang, 2018; Sørenson, 2009). Taking these various approaches to learning also necessitates working differently than traditionally encountered in qualitative education research. As Sørenson notes, because of education research’s humanist tradition there is a lack of methodology for the study of learning and activity, “that does not begin with humans, their aims, and their interests.” (2009 p. 132). Such perspectives of learning and activity require phenomenological approaches to research in addition to traditional ethnographic techniques. Consequently, I lay out my rationale for augmenting interpretivist ethnographic research methods with a variety of poststructurally informed approaches to data collection and analysis. I describe my method in this study as emplaced ethnography and explain how I leverage the concept of emplacement to examine and understand the fluid activities and relationships of the SITA community and the Arboretum.

Previous research on placemaking and learning spaces tends to be of short duration, task-specific or focused on how spaces should be managed by institutions. What is missing from research are investigations that are protracted, intimate, and multifaceted. At the same time, the study of placemaking
presents a challenge to finding appropriate methods that align with and attend to place-research’s interdisciplinary and intersectional (more-than-human) nature. To do so, I draw upon methods from disciplines including education, social geography, and art education. As my guiding contribution, I operationalize the poststructural concept of meshwork as an analytical lens to investigate the relationship between people (SITA members) and the environment (Arboretum) in the collaborative endeavor of creative placemaking.

Unlike most social science research that begins with a question to answer or a problem to solve, this study begins in the middle (Deleuze, 1988). My goal is to understand how a particular place—a university’s arboretum and a singular learning community are entangled together through the activity of placemaking. Therefore, the findings of this investigation while not generalizable, does seek to build theory and push for new methods for understanding and studying more-than-human learning systems that are by definition, fluid, changing, and complex. To accomplish these goals, I, like Sørenson, must begin “with the particulars” by observing the fluid relations of people and their environments in action. Starting with particulars also means often working backward to find the theories, methods, and techniques that describe what is observed and experienced. This study does not provide causal explanation or predictions about why and where creative placemaking can happen. Rather, this study offers a contextualizing and interpretive case of how people learn with and makes sense of place at the individual, ensemble/small group, and community levels. Furthermore, the SITA community and the Arboretum as a case illustrates how over an extended period (seventeen years and counting) a learning space becomes a dwelling place—one that acts and is perceived very differently than other more traditional university spaces.

I draw from community of practice literature (Wenger, 2010) to structure my research questions and focus my analyses across diverse data. A community of practice framework helps me understand how the Arboretum was a collaborative partner in the SITA community’s engagement, imagination, and its alignment and inscription of practices that make up their placemaking activity. My research questions are as follows:
1. How do SITA members engage with the Arboretum as a physical-environmental space and as a member of the SITA community?

2. How does SITA members imagine across the Arboretum? How does the Arboretum support members’ creative activities and practices?

3. What are the ways that SITA members aligns and inscribes practices with the Arboretum? What is SITA’s placemaking praxis and how does it support continual dwelling and meaning-making in the Arboretum?

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first provides my overarching ethnographic methodological rationale. The second section explains the theoretical underpinnings of my methods by summarizing emplaced ethnography’s use in previous qualitative research. Based on this previous body of work, I define what it means to me to work in an emplaced way and how I leverage the concepts of emplacement as a researcher with my positionality in the context of the study. Furthermore, I explore what techniques support an emplaced approach, including methods for moving through place and creative forms of mapping. The third section describes my study’s context, the Arboretum, participants, and the SITA’s rehearsal and performance process. I also provide a synopsis of the 2017 play, *The Tempest*. The last and fourth section details my procedures, data collection, and analysis.

**Emplaced Ethnography**

Ethnographic techniques form the basis for assembling the primary record for this study: *experiencing* (participant-observation), *inquiring* (interviewing), and *examining* (analyzing participant artifacts) (Wolcott, 2008). I also use ethnographically informed mapping activities, particularly in companionship with participant interviews. Ethnography as a method allows me to understand the complex ways the SITA community makes meaning with the Arboretum and how the Arboretum shapes SITA’s activities.
Emplaced ethnography is uniquely positioned to investigate agentful topographies and the communities they support. While traditional ethnographic approaches use the lens of culture to describe a group of people—with people serving as the primary unit of analysis, emplaced ethnography, on the other hand, closely examines how an environment and its particular social-historical and material qualities inform socio-cultural activities. Similarly, an emplaced approach uses place—a school, a natural feature, community landmark, etc., as the primary or focal unit of analysis. Thus, the Arboretum is the primary unit of analysis of the study and the SITA community’s placemaking praxis as the primary socio-cultural activity.

I followed procedures of prolonged engagement, triangulation of multiple types of data and theoretical perspectives. I examined outlying examples that I used to refine my observations, conducted various forms of member checking, and provided rich description to adhere to traditional standards of validity and trustworthiness within interpretivist qualitative research (Creswell 2013; Glesne, 2011). In this section, I attend to these procedures generally. I describe in more detail how I carried out these procedures according to various emplaced modes and aligned with each research question within the findings chapters respectively.

This study is the result of a prolonged engagement with the Arboretum and SITA community for a much longer time than the duration of data collection. I engaged with the SITA community during their rehearsals and production for six weeks. However, I have intimately known the Arboretum for fifteen years, having spent three spring-summers within its boundaries as I participated in three SITA productions. I interviewed a range of participants from the 2017 *Tempest* production and explored case studies that offered counter-examples to refine my theories and analysis. From these interviews, I selected cases that represented the levels of performing experience and range of relationships people had with the Arboretum through their SITA participation. I looked for patterns that also resonated across all the interviews and formed themes within the case studies. Through the cases I was able to explore the themes
more deeply and from multiple perspectives to describe more fully the variety and shared resonance of the participants’ lived experience.

I employed various member checks and supported participants’ agency throughout the study. For example, member checks were partly accomplished by having participants lead me where they wanted to go on walking-interviews and using photo-voice methods (Wang & Burris 1997; Chio & Fandt 2007) where participants took pictures of the Arboretum as part of the data collection. Together these methods provided a level of autonomy and agency in multiple formats; such as photos, routes, and interviews. As a way to “member-check” with the Arboretum as its own entity and to capture the “feeling” of what it was like to be there, I kept a series of field video notes and soundscapes. These were short clips of me walking down the same trails to the rehearsal area, capturing the sights and sounds (bird song, the metallic clang of my water bottle, the crunch of boots on the trail) as well as documenting the environmental changes as spring turned into summer. In these video notes/journals, I would discuss the weather, the energy of the cast, and comment on anything I saw or felt. Although peripheral, these short impressionist video/audio sketches became important affective touchpoints as I wrote my findings.

**Emplaced ethnography as a method to study agentful topographies.** Despite the spatial turn in education and social science research, there is a lack of established spatial and sensory methods for studying enactive environments and the social practices that may take place in them (Pink, Hubbard, O'Neill, Radley 2010; Pink, 2008). Scholars of space call for borrowing techniques and methods from the arts for social science research (Thrift, 2008)—ones that make ways for emergent, playful, and unconventional means. I turn to ethnographers such as Pink (2013; 2009), St. Pierre (1997) and Powell (2010; 2016) to craft an *emplaced* way of working to understand and describe SITA members’ multisensory experiences, ways of knowing, practice, memories, and imagination as well as my own.

Emplacement, as a methodological concept in education research, has strong ties to situated learning as well as poststructuralist orientations. For example, Fors, Bäckström, and Pink provide an
outline of sensory-emplaced learning that advances education studies and research developed from Deleuzian perspectives (2013). Their work defines emplacement in an educational context as understanding how human bodies become situated and embedded in cultural and material practices within changing environments across time or place-events (Massey, 2005). Citing Resnick (1994), Fors, Båckström, and Pink call for education research that emphasizes the environment as something to be interacted with rather than to be acted upon. Thus, I undertake working in an emplaced way with the goal of understanding how the SITA community learns with the Arboretum. Emplaced ethnography is well suited to understand how place-based communities construct meaning; how SITA members create knowledge and make art with the Arboretum; how they come to inhabit the Arboretum (dwelling, forming routines and habits), and how they learn placemaking practices from each other.

Emplacement as a methodological concept also finds resonance with Ingold’s concept of meshwork. Emplacement is something practiced not achieved. Therefore, emplacement is the constant adjustment of meaning and understanding regarding the placement and configuration of components in a taskscape or environment. An environment that one is already familiar with from previous experience. A major difference between transport and wayfaring, Ingold argues, is “emplacement” or the establishment of fluid relations of the moving subject with the materials and other organisms they encounter. While wayfaring is place-binding (in part due to emplacement), transport fragments or displaces the subject from their environment (Ingold, 2011). Thus, emplacement as a methodological stance informs and strengthens placemaking as meshworking by creating a synergistic approach to gathering and creating data along with its analyses.

Therefore, to meet the challenges of spatial social science research, I build upon Hunter’s methodological work of emplaced ethnography (2012) by incorporating phenomenological informed data and analyses, integrating methods that attend to movement and embodiment of place, and the creative use of mapping. Finally, working across three modes of emplacement, I describe my positionality as both a member of the SITA community and its researcher.
Emplacement as a phenomenological inspired approach. Forms of phenomenological inspired approaches (visual, sensory and emplaces) refocus ethnographic research beyond what people do in special places towards understanding how people understand place through their routine movements and activities. These ways invite “new forms” of ethnographic knowing and “routes” into other people’s lived experiences and meaning-making (Pink, 2009).

It provides us with ways of responding to research questions that involve focusing on forms of intimacy, sociality, and emplacement, with which ethnographers who are not sensitive to the multi-sensoriality of our experiences and environments would not engage. (p. 26)

One way that this study pushes to expand ethnographic data is to include what St. Pierre refers to as “transgressive data,” or data that resists the primacy of textual/linguistic and linear forms (1997). By including data that is focused on emotions, sensations, and even “dream data” into data collection, ethnographers expand the scope of information and ways of knowing (St. Pierre, 1997). SITA’s placemaking is an exercise in communicating emotional, sensual/ somatically charged atmospheres along with Shakespeare's narratives. Consequently, SITA’s activity produces several kinds of “transgressive data” through its performance of imaginary worlds. Moreover, the Arboretum itself offers its own transgressive data in the form of sights, sounds, atmospheres, and its constant growth and change. Therefore, the phenomenological approaches outlined above attend to ways that SITA members sense and experience the Arboretum. The methods also consider how these collectivized sensations are projected back and provide audiences and other visitors ways with which to engage in their own creative placemaking.

Methods for moving through place. My emplaced approach attends to people’s embodied movement through place. Walking, for example, takes a prominent role in the manner that places are studied and understood (Debord, 2006; Verran, 1998; Ingold, 2011). Walking as a way of knowing has been used with sensory methods of ethnography, social science research, and art practice.
For example, O'Neill and Hubbard (2012) used walking as a part of participatory action research and arts practice (ethnomimesis) to understand how refugees and asylum seekers negotiate their senses of belonging. Therefore, I treat the ways that participants moved through the spaces of the Arboretum as spatial and embodied discursive practices. Furthermore, walking with my participants became an important part of my data collection and analysis. I will discuss walking-inspired methods in detail in the third section of this chapter that describes my data collection and research design.

**Mapping and creative cartography as sources of data.** Within this study, mapping is both a research method and a form of ethnographic inquiry (Powell, 2016) and therefore, contributes to emplaced ethnography by providing a set of cartographic techniques and tools. Furthermore, the kinds of creative mapping activities in this study further the goals of emplacement by aligning with poststructural sensibilities towards the emergent, experiential, relational, and imaginative affects of place rather than merely place’s representation.

Maps have been used to represent the spatial structures of stories and their relations with place. Mapping can also be used to create a rich tapestry of shared experiences across many narratives (Caquard & Cartwright, 2014). As a method used in ethnography, mapping lends a particular perspective on discussions of multisensory ethnography by “foregrounding the mutually constitutive nature of place, identity, and social relationships” (Powell, 2016 p. 405). Similarly, Corner (1999) argues that mapping agencies within social geographies provide various techniques to disrupt, create, and reveal places’ hidden agencies and relationships. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between mapping and tracing, Corner, configures poststructural modes in which creative cartography might be “performed.”

Mapping has been used in studies of both adults and children as a means to make thinking visible and as a tool for agentive place design. For example, Rousell, Cutcher, and Irwin (2016) use immersive cartographic methods such as learner created poetry, photography, and drawings as performative gestures of moving across landscapes to understand eco-aesthetics of learning environments. In Green’s study of
children’s placemaking agency, mapping techniques such as scale, keys, and schematic views were studied as design literacies. Mapping techniques were used as the children learned about and designed their school food gardens (2014). Charlton and colleagues (2014) use children's maps of their inhabited spaces to understand transcultural identity and inclusion/exclusion experiences.

Maps as texts and mapping as pedagogically rich activity aligns with poststructural concepts of rhizomatic readings and meaning-making. For example, according to Deleuze and Guattari, there is no set way to read a map. A map has “multiple entryways,” which they contrast to traditional linear text. Furthermore, maps are artifacts that both reveal and conceal by offering sets of codes that can be interpreted in different ways depending on the needs or experience of the map maker or reader. (1987). While mapmaking can entail traditional cartographic principles such as scale, elevation, and legends, it can also entail what Ingold calls *anti-cartographic* impulses (2007). Anti-cartographic ruptures traditional principles of mapping by eschewing accuracy and traditional visual presentation for more affective, relational, and imaginary representations. For example, spatial theorists such as Debord, and de Certeau used creative forms of mapping to understand the everyday and practiced way people organize and move through cities. Such mapping and practiced-based ways of sense-making with place often run counter to “official” statistical and analytical forms of mapping. Thus, as Corner argues, the creative agency of mapping lies in the ability to “uncover realities previously unseen or unimagined even across seemingly exhausted grounds.” (1999, p. 213).

Rhizomatic approaches to mapping address the multi-voiced and fluid nature of both self and place (Powell, 2016; 2010). Creative mapping, along with anti-cartographic methods, supports the relational and affective aspect of both narrative and place (Powell, 2016). Therefore, I draw from traditional and more creative forms of mappings to both collect and analyze my data. Within this study, I focus on several distinct cartographic techniques and map forms:

1. Participant annotated maps using the University’s official Arboretum visitor map.
2. The Shakespeare text and script as a literary guide/map.

3. Interpretive drawn maps of Prospero’s island by SITA performers.

4. Production artifact maps (director’s blocking map, usher path map, costumer’s character concept sketch).

5. Meshworking map of SITA activity.

Each kind of map offers a different way SITA members experience and make meaning with the Arboretum. Furthermore, maps provide visual representations of the imagined places, subconscious, and affectively charged data (St. Pierre, 1997). Consequently, I draw upon Corner’s mapping operations of drift, layering, and rhizome (1999) to inform my meshworking analysis and creation of maps for this study. Since cartographic activities are diverse and contextually bound within the study, I discuss the specific map information detailing their creation, use, and analysis within the corresponding findings chapters.

**Modes of emplacement.** Emplaced ethnography is informed by phenomenological approaches and helps elucidate the nuanced ways that place (Arboretum) invites and invokes people (SITA community) to engage and imagine with it. Similarly, aspects of the study are dependent upon my own primary experiences, including the exchange of emplaced practices and knowledge within SITA. I practiced emplacement across three different analytical and research focused modes; emplacement with the Arboretum through my role as an emic ethnographer, emplacement with the SITA community as an engaged community member, and emplacement with texts through the role I describe as a performing pedagogue. The modes allow me to account for and expand upon what it means to have prolonged engagement, member checking, informed multiple forms of data, and application of theories. In a later section of this chapter I will define and describe each mode of emplacement and how if informed my research goals, data gathering, and analysis.

Conceptualizing emplacement in various forms forces researchers, educators, and designers to
think about all the ways people experience place, what they do there, what they bring with them, and what they take away. Working in this manner aligns with sensory-emplaced ways of learning put forth by Fors, Båckström, and Pink (2013) and provides examples of how emplacement may be understood. Thus, I explore how the modes of emplacement opened me up to opportunities and challenges throughout the study.

**Study Setting, Contexts, and Participants**

**Setting.** The Nichols Arboretum (123 acres, 49.7 hectares) is operated by the University of Michigan. Located on the eastern edge of its central campus in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the Arboretum is a mosaic of university and city properties operated as one unit. The Arboretum is open daily from sunrise to sunset with no charge for admission. The Huron River separates a northern section of the arboretum's floodplain woods; the railroad marks the northern border. Figure 3-1 is a copy of the visitor’s map, which provides main trails and features of the Arboretum. The visitor’s map shows the Arboretum’s historic Peony Collection, Heathdale Collection (species primarily from Appalachia), the Centennial Shrub Collection, and the Dow Prairie.
The Arboretum was designed in 1906 by O. C. Simonds, whose works includes Lincoln Park and who is considered one of the founders of Prairie-style landscape architecture. Simonds used the steep glacial topography to include areas both for botanical collections and natural areas. Many of the older plantings date from the 1920s and 1930s, and many of original trails were created in conjunction with the WPA. In recent years, the Arboretum has focused on invasive species eradication and river-front restoration projects.

The expansion of the University Medical Center at the northeast corner of the Arboretum has helped tie it to the broader community. The Ronald McDonald House, a home away from home for families of children in long-term medical care, is located a few yards from the Arboretum entrance. Medical and hospital staff are frequent visitors, taking lunchtime walks in scrubs with hospital badges.
Medical helicopters fly by at regular intervals, reminding visitors that on the other side of the tree line, dying and living happen concurrently with the slower, bucolic pace of the park.

SITA rehearsals and performances began at the Reader’s Center, a three-story historic home that was relocated to the Arboretum. The third floor is devoted to the researchers and professional staff. SITA performers occupied the second floor, which turned into a makeshift costume/prop loft for the performance season (May-June). The visitor’s center, which is located on the first floor and opens to a pea-gravel patio with umbrella tables, was the primary area where the casts assembled for rehearsals. Climbing hydrangeas grew off the side of the building, hiding bird’s nests and the very precious single outdoor electrical outlet. The hydrangea provided a visceral sweet basil-like smell that is one of the evocative characteristics of SITA performance season. Dress rehearsals always coincided with peak peony season, drawing hundreds of people to walk through over thirty beds of flowers, taking pictures and picnicking. Consequently, the Arboretum was in full use by visitors and community members just before and during SITA’s performance season.

Context

**Shakespeare in the Arb: A community of practice.** Shakespeare in the Arboretum is the creation of Karen Dombrowsky, a lecturer at the University’s Residential College (RC). The summer Shakespeare season is now in its seventeenth year and is a popular Ann Arbor tradition. The unique experience of SITA comes from the environmental staging of the plays. There is no fixed stage; instead, the audience follows the action through different locations in the Arboretum, often walking over a mile from beginning to end of the production. Auditions for the play were held in late April during the last week of the spring semester. The first rehearsal took place during the first week of May. The rehearsal timeline averaged about six weeks. Performances were Thursday through Sunday starting in the first week of June and continued for the entire month. Each Fall over Labor Day weekend, the play was revived for two performances for new students. On average, a total of fourteen performances were held.
The SITA community in its broadest sense included performers, audiences, arboretum staff, and volunteer ushers who were involved with the production. Although there were many students, alumni, and others who I consider as part of the extended community (people like myself, for example), for this study I narrowed my participants to the cast and crew members of the 2017 production of *The Tempest*.

**Rehearsals.** Formal rehearsal took place three times a week and lasted between three to five hours. Each rehearsal started with a physical warm up and voice warm up with the entire cast. The first rehearsals began with a walking tour of the Arboretum accompanied by a naturalist. Performers were provided a short history of the garden and advice like how to stay clear of poison ivy and stinging insects. The second rehearsal consisted of tablework or sitting together reading through the script and clarifying questions. The early rehearsals in the Arboretum were very experimental; ideas were articulated, discussed, and tried out. By the third week of rehearsals, all the scene settings were decided, and blocking, for the most part, was set. By weeks five and six, the play was rehearsed in its entirety from start to finish.

Performers partook in three basic kinds of rehearsals and training. The first was table work, reading the script, and working through the language. Next, performers practiced both body and voice work. Physical exploration is stronger in certain plays, especially those involving music, dance, slapstick or chorus work. For example, the Ariel ensemble spent two weeks working with a choreographer in order to become attuned to their body movement—improvising through gesture and moving through the environment. Other bodywork could include fight scenes, swordplay, music, and dancing. The last kind of rehearsal was scene work, where the double-cast ensembles blocked the scenes and ran lines. Scene work took up the bulk of rehearsal process. Due to SITA’s unique double-casting practice, there were multiple groups of cast members who took turns rehearsing. At the end of the rehearsal process, each cast took turns running the entire show.
**Ensembles.** In *The Tempest*, there were discrete character groups or ensembles. These groups did not have much interaction until the last scene of the play. Table 3-1 describes the ensembles within the play and their corresponding focal director.

Table 3-1: *Tempest* ensemble breakdown with focal director.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ensemble</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Focal Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lovers</td>
<td><em>Ferdinand, Miranda</em></td>
<td>Karen*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariels</td>
<td><em>Ariels, goddesses, and musicians</em></td>
<td>Mona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fools</td>
<td><em>Stephano, Trinculo, Caliban</em></td>
<td>Ralph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipwrecked dudes</td>
<td><em>Alonso, Gonzalo, Antonio, Sebastian, Adrian, Francisco, and mariners</em></td>
<td>Malcolm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Artistic director

Each ensemble worked with a particular director in concert with Karen. Malcolm, in addition to playing Prospero, worked primarily with the Shipwrecked Dudes.

Each character was double cast, meaning that two performers could play the role. Consequently, performers traded off performance days. For example, the fools ensemble consisted of three roles. However, the ensemble was made up of six performers, who rehearsed together and took turns running the scenes. Although most performers were paired in the same combination, each performance had a slightly different cast. Each ensemble focused on different rehearsal activities depending on their characters’ function. For example, the Ariel ensemble spent many hours working on movement and songs while the fools focused on slapstick gags and use of props.

**Participants.** SITA members were diverse in age, theater experience, and affiliation to the university and broader community. Most participants were students at the university between the ages of 18-24, many of whom were also enrolled in the Residential College. Similarly, most participants were involved with theater in some way; ten of the university students and recent graduates were theater majors
or double majors in theater and another subject. There was usually a core of SITA participants, including the directors, co-directors, costume mistress, and four to six experienced performers and crew. However, the season in which the study was conducted was considered a “building year,” meaning that there were more first-time and novice members than usual. Life events such as new jobs and weddings prevented many SITA regulars from participating in 2017.

The directors consisted of Karen, a theater faculty member at the Residential College (RC), Ralph, another RC theater faculty member who often acted and worked with the comedic ensembles, and two co-directors, both of whom were RC alums that participated in the original or early SITA productions. Both Malcolm and Charlotte were in their mid-30’s and have stayed connected for the past seventeen years. During the 2017 season, Charlotte was absent from most of the production due to her wedding. In part due to Charlotte’s absence and her own interest in directing, Mona, a senior RC student and second-year participant, took on the responsibility of student director, mainly working with the musicians and Ariel ensemble. She had worked informally with Malcolm the previous year as ang apprentice director. Other participants throughout the years have included university faculty and staff, professional performers and musicians, and high school students. The director Karen rarely turned away people who wanted to be involved: “We can usually find a place for someone,” whether it be a three-year-old baby fairy or a seventy-year-old strolling musician.

**Levels of participation.** Although there was a relatively flat hierarchy, for my analysis I categorized and compared the experiences of novice versus experienced members. I defined *experienced* and *novice* in two ways: The first conceptualization of experienced was based on group participation and affiliation, i.e., performers and crew who had been a part of the community for more than two years. The second definition was based on prior experience with performing in general. Therefore, according to this classification, an experienced participant may have been new to the space but seasoned as a performer.

As described previously, performers were double-cast in each role. For example, two actresses played the part of Miranda and traded off performance days for scheduling purposes. Table 3-2 provides
the names of the participants, their affiliation with the university, general age range, and status as first-time vs. experienced performers. The youngest cast member was twelve, and the oldest was seventy.

During the study year, first-time performers numbered nineteen and included several high school students, but their participation was fairly unusual. Twenty-five performers or over half of the 2017 cast were current or recently graduated university students.

Table 3-2. List of participants and roles, age range, university affiliation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mature participant, 25 years +</th>
<th>High/middle school aged</th>
<th>Recently graduated university student</th>
<th>Current university student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wayne (musician)</td>
<td>Violet * (Ariel)</td>
<td>Henry (Antonio)</td>
<td>Kat (mariner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan UM staff (Caliban)</td>
<td>Elliot (cabin boy)</td>
<td>Joe (Caliban)</td>
<td>Colin* (Ariel &amp; music director)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin (Gonzalo)</td>
<td>Vivian * (Mariner)</td>
<td>Jenee (Ariel)</td>
<td>Iris* (Ariel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl UM staff (Gonzalo)</td>
<td>Oliver * (Stephano)</td>
<td>Charlie (Trinculo)</td>
<td>Corryn* (Ariel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley UM staff (Prospero)</td>
<td>Hussein (musician)</td>
<td>Scott (Stephano)</td>
<td>Hannah * (Ariel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm RC Alum/director (Prospero)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teddy (Trinculo)</td>
<td>Jake * (Ariel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich UM staff (Alonso)</td>
<td>Siobhan (Ariel)*</td>
<td>Philip * (Sebastian)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisette RC Alum* (Fabian)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alex (attends local community college) (Ferdinand)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasha (Ariel)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Keith (Sebastian)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin (Sebastian)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meredith (Miranda)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corneliuss * (Alonso)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Julia * (Ariel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen (UM faculty (director)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dev* (Ferdinand)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anya (costume designer)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ramona * (Ariel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph UM faculty (comedic director)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liza *(Ariel)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mona (student director)</td>
<td>Nora* (stage manager)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* denotes the first time in SITA

**Naming conventions for research participants.** I employ specific naming conventions to describe the varying degrees of engagement of the participants as research subjects: community, member, performer, and participant. Although all forty-four members of the 2017 *Tempest* cast consented to be research subjects—to be filmed, recorded, and observed during rehearsals and the production—not all the members of cast and crew directly participated in interviews and interpretive map making. Interviews were voluntary and availability was often subject to the weather and people’s rehearsal and personal schedules. Similarly, due to the double-cast nature of the production and as a single researcher, I was not able to follow every performer and their ensemble. The following distinctions are used throughout the study.

**Community:** SITA community includes past and present cast and crew members, musicians, ushers and volunteers, and the audience members who routinely watch and enjoy the performances.

**Member:** Member is a term that I use for the most part to describe the cast and crew of 2017 *Tempest*. However, it also can be applied to cast and crews of past productions. Not all members are performers, for example, costume-mistress, directors, speech and stage-fighting coaches, and musicians. Similarly, although I am tempted to use the term alums, not all members were/are students at the university, and as evidenced by this production, many members were mature adults from the local area.

**Performer:** I use the term performer to denote the dramatic actors in the production. I make this distinction to describe when members/ participants were actively engaged in performing “on stage” rather than taking part socially in the Arboretum. I also use this term when I examine how the Ariel ensemble improvise and collaborate. I followed both casts of SITA performers on two different nights during the performances in front of an audience.
Participant: I use the term participant in its narrowest sense of those members who directly engaged with me in interviews or mapping activities. Participant is also useful as a term because some long-standing members like Anya the costume mistress, who were not actors, i.e., performers.

2017 production: The Tempest

The play for the SITA’s 2017 season was The Tempest (see Figure 3-2) and is a particularly rich narrative to use as a case study for SITA’s placemaking. The play’s themes of enchanted places, exploring, being lost and being found, have embedded within them ways to explore place’s engagement and agency. The play is one of Shakespeare’s later works and is often considered his farewell play. It has a considerable history of literary quotation and refrain. It is one of the central allegories in T. S. Eliot’s Wasteland and provides the title of Huxley’s Brave New World. Recent retellings and reconceptions include Margaret Atwood’s Hag-Seed and Julie Taymor’s 2010 film, featuring Helen Miren as a female Prospera. Two of the play’s most quoted lines are Miranda’s “Oh brave new world which has such people in it,” and Prospero’s “We are such stuff as dreams are made on.” The Tempest is one of the few Shakespearean dramas that align with the Aristotelian unities of time and place, meaning that the play takes place in real time, and is set within a single place.
Figure 3-2: 2017 Tempest Production Poster. The poster features the faces of Prospero and Ariel created by a storm-tossed tree. Each production has an original production poster that visually synthesizes the characters of the plays with trees and other landscapes. Original artwork by David Zinn.

**The Tempest summary.** Prospero, the former Duke of Milan, is shipwrecked on an island with his daughter Miranda, due to the treachery of his usurping brother Antonio and fellow schemer Sebastian. For twelve years, Prospero has devoted his life to studying and controlling the island via magic that he has gotten from his books. The only other inhabitants are the ethereal spirit Ariel and the half-formed islander, Caliban. Prospero conjures a giant storm that shipwrecks Alonso, King of Naples, Prospero’s old friend, Gonzalo, and part of the court including a drunken butler, court fool, Antonio, and Sebastian. The drunken courtiers meet up with Caliban and hatch a liquor-infused murder plot against Prospero for mastery of the island. Prospero conjures magic to trick the fools and, with the help of Ariel, orchestrates a love match between a shipwrecked prince and Prospero’s daughter Miranda while exacting his revenge on his traitor brother Antonio. After the crew reunites, Prospero reveals his brother’s treachery and prepares
to return to Milan in the King’s ship. He frees Ariel and contemplates his return to the civilized world and his death.

The play is thought to be based on a historical expedition of an English fleet to Virginia in 1609, which lost its flagship off the coast of Bermuda. Remarkably, the shipwrecked crew was able to rebuild its boats and a year later was reunited with the Jamestown colony. The accounts of this journey reflect many features of the play. For example, Caliban, the wild inhabitant or “savage” man of the island, is likened to the Indians and Cannibals described by early European explorers.

**Themes in The Tempest.**

*Literacy and the power of language and learning.* Prospero, the master of the island, is also a scholar and sorcerer. Prospero brings to the island his books, old-world language, and the power to manipulate the land and the elements to his will. In many productions, he is interpreted as the colonizer. Prospero is also the creator of the maze in which the shipwrecked crew finds itself lost in “as strange a maze as e’er men trod,” (Alonso 5.1.293) which is an allusion to the Greek myth of the labyrinth, itself a metaphor of the human mind and psyche. A romantic drama not unlike *Twelfth Night* or *Midsummer*, *The Tempest* nonetheless has more somber moments, especially when seen through the colonial lens of the character Caliban, a “half-formed” human that Prospero raises to be his servant. “You taught me language, and my profit on ’t, Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you, For learning me your language!” (Act 1, scene 2). This quotation illustrates the complex relationship between Prospero’s books and learning. In one light it represents the triumph of the West, its science and power to colonize and profit from natural resources. It also represents how learning and language can be corrupting forces that create hierarchies of power and disenfranchise those who do not have the same level of proficiency. In one of the last monologues of the play, Prospero says, “I’ll drown my books,” signaling the end of his attempt to manipulate nature through the knowledge of texts or the power of his words.
Dreaming, sleep, and wakefulness. Dreams, sleep, and wakefulness are some of the subtler themes of the play. Prospero’s line, “We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep” suggests the ephemerality of life. Caliban’s assures Stephano and Trinculo that rather than fearing the island, they should instead wonder at it, as it is a place of magic and beauty:

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
The clouds met thought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked
I cried to dream again.
Tempest, Act III, scene ii

Being lost and being found. The play’s themes of being lost and found provide a serendipitously rich opportunity to explore the complex relationships and practices we have with place. Each character has a unique relationship with the island: Prospero flits between viewing the island as both prison and study, Caliban as a place of magic and wonderment, and Stephano as a land to be conquered and mastered while Ariel is the wind, air, and waves of the island itself.

Research Design: Study Procedure and Data Collection

The study’s procedures were conducted over eighteen days, spanning six weeks in the spring of 2017. The total number of consented participants included all forty-four cast and crew members. My first visit took place before the official start of rehearsals. A city sewer line construction foiled Karen’s original plan for the production. So she, myself, and seven other cast members met to walk around the Arboretum and brainstorm possible areas to use for the play. Together we explored the Heathdale, Main Valley, and East Valley to explore the space more in-depth. During this time, I took pictures and made field notes.

I followed the rehearsals from May 10 through June 2 for a total of twelve rehearsal meetings ranging between three to five hours each. For each rehearsal, I arrived an hour before call time to sit with
the directors during production meetings, to eat lunch, and to bond with cast members. I also assisted with small tasks such as pinning costumes and organizing or carrying props. Every week I discussed the progress of the production with the lead director, Karen, and co-director, Malcolm.

During rehearsals, I followed one ensemble, the Ariels, in particular, because their performances required a great deal of physicality and close collaboration between performers. Moreover, Ariel as a character, had the strongest relationship to the island and was considered its embodiment/extension. Therefore, the Ariel character represented the extreme end of place-motivated and place-conscious spectrum. The Ariel ensemble consisted of eleven performers total, seven of whom were on stage at any given time. Ariel-performers were required to sing, dance, and collectively represent a single magic being that had the power of the island. The Ariel ensemble included a range of both experienced and novice members.

I used a combination of video and audio recordings to capture rehearsals and two performances, resulting in thirty hours of video. Because each ensemble was often rehearsing in a different area of the Arboretum, I would drift between ensembles or spaces, setting up my video camera focused on one, while using a combination of voice recorder, photographs, or videos on my mobile device to capture the activity of the other ensemble. At the end of most rehearsals, performers gathered for notes, and each director provided feedback to the cast. The directors shared with me their written rehearsal and production notes, together these totaled thirteen handwritten pages and my field notes totaled fourteen pages.

I conducted audio interviews with twenty-one individuals in the cast including directors, musicians, and costume mistress (see Table 3-2). Each interview lasted between thirty and forty-five minutes and consisted of a short mapping activity where the participant would annotate an Arboretum visitor map. When the weather permitted, interviews were conducted as we walked through the Arboretum. I asked the participants to lead the way and to take pictures of their favorite spaces, ones that were emotionally charged or that they found interesting. The interviews were semi-structured with an overall question protocol. However, interviews were participant-driven to depth and range of conversation
around question’s themes. Before dress-rehearsal week, I conducted a second map activity. I gave paper, crayons, colored pencils, and markers to the performers and asked them to quickly create and annotate a map of Prospero’s island according to their dramatic character’s understanding and relationship with it. As the participants drew, I circulated, asking them to reflect or clarify particular drawings.

I returned for the second week of the performance run and attended and recorded two performances (one with each cast). I also recorded elements of pre and post-performance activities such as getting into costume, warming-up, director’s notes, and celebrations. Finally, I added my field notes (fourteen single-spaced pages). I also collected pictures of the doodles that cast members made in their scripts and a village of child-made fairy houses, adding my reflective drawings and impressions, and other ephemera. Table 3-3 describes the data type and quantity collected for the study.

Table 3-3: Data type, quantity, and duration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>Quantity/duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one-on-one interviews (not including directors)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>annotated maps</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpretive drawn maps</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>production videos</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>director’s rehearsal/production notes</td>
<td>13 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal videos</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/specialists interviews</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photographs</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher field notes</td>
<td>14 pages (including transcribed fieldnote-audio recordings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As described previously, although all forty-four members of 2017 Tempest cast consented to be research subjects as collective performers, not all the members of cast and crew directly participated in interviews and interpretive map making. The structured aspects of the study, such as interviews and mapping activities and were voluntary. For example, not all of the participants who gave interviews drew interpretive maps. However, a diverse range of members participated in data collection outside of the video recorded and observed rehearsals and production. Table 3-4 provides the participants featured in the data artifacts collected.
Table 3-4: Participants who completed interview and annotated map activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of data collected</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-on-one interview</td>
<td>Rich &amp; Elliot, Julia, Stanley, Joe, Charlie, Veronica, Liza, Anya, Violet, Jake, Keith, Kevin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking-interviews</td>
<td>Meredith, Corryn, Teddy &amp; Scott, Carl, Vivian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director interviews</td>
<td>Karen, Malcolm, Mona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated maps</td>
<td>Corryn, Stanley, Veronica, Carl, Rich, Elliot, Charlie, Liza, Julia, Meredith, Keith, Kevin, Jake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-on-one interviews AND interpretive drawn maps</td>
<td>Carl, Stanley, Corryn, Meredith, Jake, Liza, Elliot, Rich, Charlie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data rationale.** The following section details the type of data collected, the rationale for its use from related research literature, and what insight the data provided toward answering the research questions.

**One-on-one interviews and individual maps.** One-on-one interviews and annotated maps allowed me to understand the lived experience of the participants. Interviews were driven by two methods: photo-voice and walking-interviews (Wang & Burris 1997; Chio & Fandt 2007). Participants annotated the Arboretum’s maps, and I accompanied them on their favorite/ frequented trails and paths. This technique allowed me to understand an individual's relationship to and sense of the Arboretum, and to see how this relationship colored their ability to play (in both the theatrical and ludic sense) and communicate with others. In a sense, it allowed me to recognize possible peer-effects of place. I asked the participants to take photographs of the places that were important to them. This technique provided agency for the participants and allowed them to have more control of both the voice and eye of the researcher’s gaze.

Based on concepts from narrative mapping (Fletcher, 2007) and walking pedagogies (Feinburg, 2016), I conducted walking-interviews in conjunction with the photovoice method, weather permitting (Wang & Burris 1997; Chio & Fandt 2007). Interviews were audio recorded while participants led the
way through the Arboretum. This technique more fully captured the lived experience of the participants and the soundscapes of the Arboretum such as the crunching of gravel, rustle of wind, or flow of the river, all of which are attended to with the similar consideration as answers to interview questions.

**Ensembles.** I used the videos of rehearsals and performance to understand the playful exploration and improvisations that performers had with place. Next, I narrowed the scope of my inquiry to the focal Ariel ensemble. I followed the Ariels throughout the rehearsal period, video and audio recording them, observing and partaking in their downtime. As part of these interviews, I asked how they drew upon their own experience to inform their dramatic role to understand their own place attachment (or place aversion) and imaginative engagement.

**Artifacts and tools: costumes, props, music.** I interviewed the costume mistress, choreographer, and music director to understand their creative process of drawing inspiration from the text and space to bring Prospero's island to life. I collected their drawings, drafts, and notes, as well as recording director meetings, dance, and music rehearsals.

**Interpretive-drawn maps.** The last form of data I collected was done through the interpretive mapping activity. Participants drew maps of Prospero’s island from the perspective of their dramatic character role. As part of this activity, I conducted informal map debriefings. I asked participants to describe their dramatic character and explain how and why they chose to represent the island in such a manner. This data source provided a great deal of insight into participants’ imaginative engagement with place through the play. These maps helped make visible how participants understood their characters’ relationship with Prospero’s island. The maps also offer a representational medium to demonstrate the synergy between the imaginary world of the play and the physical Arboretum.

**Data Analysis**

My research questions broadly align with three levels of analysis: individual participants, play/production, and community. However, some analyses happened between levels. Figure 3-3 illustrates how
the various techniques were used within and between levels. I describe the various interdependent analyses as *analytical turns* or put another way, how I used the same data but through a different analytical lens, theoretical frame, or used various data in concert with one another.

Figure 3-3: Analysis within and between levels of data. The analyses are organized across three levels: individual, play/production, and community. The levels broadly align with the three research questions that make up the study. Some data analyses bridge two levels and are therefore described as between levels.

Each level of analyses focused on a different temporal duration and analytical frame. Table 3-5 expands upon Figure 3-3 and provides the techniques and analytical turns along with the level of analysis, and duration.

Table 3-5: Research questions and associated analytical turns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Temporal duration</th>
<th>Techniques and analytical turns for each research question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1: Engagement</td>
<td>Retrospective over affiliation with the Arboretum or university</td>
<td>Analyzed interviews for multiple perspectives and voices. Observed and described emergent themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of analysis: Individual</td>
<td>Used annotated visitors maps to provide depth and enhance interviews. Noted areas of shared engagement and deviation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 2: Imagination</td>
<td>Identified participants who brought different voices, experience, and perspectives from SITA and developed in-depth case studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level of analysis:</strong> Play/Production</td>
<td>Single production season (about eight weeks)</td>
<td>Visually analyzed interpretively drawn maps using a meshwork analysis integrating visual components, imaginative-literacy framework, <em>Tempest</em> themes, participant reflections, and the physical Arboretum.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corroborated drawn maps with participant interviews and observations of rehearsals.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed creative activity flows, affects, and intensities across different tasks and materials. Described the perceived and potential outcomes of creative activities in terms of creative cognitive processes (inscribing, editing, communicating, discovering).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visually analyzed created artifacts and embodied performance; music, costumes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Observed human and nonhuman participants performing place together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 3: Align and Inscribe practices</td>
<td>Seventeen years of SITA activity</td>
<td>Adapted and refined <em>placemaking as meshworking</em> concepts based on poststructural concepts and theories and applied them to SITA activity. This was achieved by categorizing SITA’s practices informed by observations and my own experience and memories from performing with SITA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of analysis:</strong> Holistic view of community’s praxis</td>
<td>Based on interviews and senior member input and my personal experience, I mapped the paths of five different productions across the Arboretum.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mapped categories of activities of two strategically sampled productions. I then mapped the fluid aspects of story, movement, and language, during place performance.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Physically layered two production maps, on top of one another to observe and understand the patterns.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Analyzed the maps and my own mapping process using the mapping operations of drift, layer, and rhizome (Corner, 1999).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applied <em>placemaking as meshworking</em> concepts to peripheral Arboretum activities to understand how SITA’s influence extends out into the wider community.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Each research question uses a particular analytical frame. Therefore, I provide specific explanations of my analyses within the associated findings chapter, respectively. I provide a summary of the data and methods used in each chapter here.

**Techniques used in data analysis.**

**Research question 1.** My first research question is: *How do the participants engage with the Arboretum?* Questions of engagement describe how people move through and inhabit the Arboretum, what activities they engage in, and how they talk about the Arboretum. I sought to answer the research question by engaging SITA members in conversations concerning the following topics:

a. Where do participants go in the Arboretum? Where are their favorite places? Are there places they avoid?

b. What do the participants do in the Arboretum?

c. How do participants understand and talk about the Arboretum?

d. How do participants conceptualize the Arboretum in relation to the surrounding areas of the university campus and city?

To answer these questions, I used data from individual interviews and annotated visitor maps. The maps acted as a conversational tool that allowed me to corroborate participants’ memories with the physical geography. When possible, I conducted walking-interviews where participants showed me their favorite or frequented trails and features. I compare map annotations and Arboretum features described across all the interviews. I find and develop broad themes across the interviews and how people described the Arboretum. I then form case studies based on the diversity of participants and experiences within the community. Case studies allow me to more deeply understand people’s relationship with the Arboretum and their membership in the SITA community.
**Research question 2.** To answer the question, *how does the SITA community’s imaginative engagement with the Arboretum influence their placemaking?* I examine the interplay between SITA’s imaginative engagement with the Arboretum and the members’ visible representations through their *Tempest* placemaking such as costumes and staging. For the analyses, I rely on the following data:

a. observations  
b. rehearsal videos and field notes from 2017 *Tempest*,  
c. interviews with music and costume specialists  
d. theatrical artifacts  
e. interpretive maps drawn by participants.

I use Eisner’s four creative cognitive processes—inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering—as analytical touchpoints across SITA performers’ creative flows of activity. I follow one ensemble in particular and their imaginative engagement with a newly discovered feature in the Arboretum. I visually analyze artifacts that represent the SITA members’ creative processes. The understandings about the ways performers use their role to experience place are drawn from rehearsal videos and notes, individual interviews, and interpretive maps based on each performer’s dramatic character’s conceptualization of Prospero’s island.

**Research question 3.** My analysis uses the theoretical orientation of *placemaking as meshworking* to understand *how the SITA community inscribes and aligns their placemaking practices with the Arboretum*. Examining placemaking as meshworking allows me to understand how layers of meaning and experience associated with the Arboretum are imbricated into understandings of place over time. To do this, I incorporate my own experiences and recollections as a former member of the community. My meshworking analysis utilizes the creative cognitive processes again to categorize and analyze SITA’s praxis across its history. Through this analysis, I map different kinds of data and layer
those maps to visualize the entangled connections that make up SITA’s placemaking practices. The data used in my placemaking as meshworking analysis include:

a. Maps and interviews collected from senior SITA members that reflect on current and past performances

b. Observations of the rehearsal process

c. Informal discussion with performers during rehearsals

d. Historical photographs from past SITA productions

e. Photographic evidence collected from 2017 data collection


My Positionality as Defined Through Emplacement

As alluded to earlier, I practiced emplacement across three different analytical and research focused modes; emplacement with the Arboretum, emplacement with the SITA community, and emplacement with texts. The modes allowed me to account for and expand upon what it means to have prolonged engagement, member checking, and the ability to draw from multiple forms of data and theories.

Emplacement with the Arboretum. The first mode of emplacement I practiced was through my role as an emic ethnographer. Before I began the study, I already had a strong sense of emplacement with the Arboretum. For example, I knew both the official names of the Arboretum areas described by the visitor’s map and was privy to many of the unofficial names for places used by the SITA community. Similarly, I was familiar with many of the trails and paths. As a self-professed “nature person,” I was also familiar with the flora and fauna of the Arboretum and could easily identify what and where things grew. Going into the study, I could, for example, tell the difference between strawberries, poison ivy, and
trillium (all of which have three leaves) and where they could be found in the Arboretum. At the same time, it had been several years since I last visited. Therefore, I had to be attuned to how the Arboretum had changed since my last visit.

**Emplacement with the SITA community.** The second mode of emplacement was that of a community member. As stated previously, I was in three productions over a five-year span and had attended as an audience member at least four other productions. Several of the participants, along with Karen, the director, I have known for over 11 years. Therefore, as a past community member and participant, I had privileged insight into the people, knowledge, practices, and processes of SITA. I was able to ask specific questions about productions, quote lines, and describe characters from various plays (those that I experienced as a performer and audience member). Prior to the start of the research in late April, I talked at length with Karen about the play, her goals for the production, and her ideas for staging. I pitched some of my ideas for the study design and what I hoped to learn. I discussed several mapping activities, including having participants draw a map of what they imagined Prospero’s island might look like. Karen suggested that participants draw maps of the island through the eyes of their dramatic character as an empathy exercise. Karen agreed to announce the study during auditions. Later, Karen shared the cast email and contact information with me so I could reach out to the cast and schedule interview times in between rehearsals. I also reached out to Malcolm, my friend and SITA co-director, in early March explaining the study. I asked him about getting other SITA members interested and open to be part of the study, and he readily lent his support.

As a non-performing member of the 2017 *Tempest* cast, I engaged in many of the activities that go into making a show. When confined to the indoors due to rain, I filmed the busy and chaotic way people filled corners singing, running lines, sewing, or mending boots, eating bread and peanut butter, which was the ever-present institutional snack of SITA. I bought peanut butter and bread, sewed costumes, helped organized shoes, belts, and swords. I carried props to the rehearsal space. I took part in warm up rehearsals, doing voice exercises and stretches with the cast. I led a partner awareness exercise
with the shipwrecked-dudes ensemble. I stayed for notes and the directors’ debrief after each rehearsal. Throughout the rehearsal duration, I made sure to reflect upon how the rehearsal process was different or similar to those I had experienced previously.

**Emplacement with texts.** I describe the last emplaced mode as one that was situated in the Shakespeare text. Because SITA’s goal was to create and perform an immersive imaginary world with the Arboretum for each Shakespeare production, it was essential for me as a researcher to have an in-depth knowledge of the particular Shakespeare text. *The Tempest’s* story and themes lend themselves to study placemaking. Consequently, I needed to leverage my knowledge of the play, the intricacies of performing Shakespeare, and acting in general to answer my research questions, especially those concerning how SITA members imagined with the Arboretum and how they aligned and inscribed their placemaking practices.

**Emplacing the Arboretum in a performing text.** To carry out the study, I needed to be able to be emplaced in the text of *The Tempest*—to be emplaced in the imaginary world of Prospero’s island. I had seen *The Tempest* performed twice before, a professional performance, and a production of SITA’s *Tempest* in 2007 that Karen staged mostly in the prairie area. Before beginning the study, I bought a copy of the script and re-read the play. Karen and I watched Julie Taymor’s film version together and then discussed the play before I attended the first rehearsal. I always brought my script with me to rehearsals and sometimes would be “on-book” reading out missed lines. By the end of the study, I knew most of Ariel’s lines and fools’ lines by heart. Therefore, I was emplaced in the literary and performing space of *The Tempest* as much as the performers.

I was inspired by Degraff’s book *Plotted* (2014), a visual anthology of literature rendered visually as maps. Consequently, I had settled on having SITA members draw some kind of map based on the Shakespeare text, although I was not quite sure how I would use or analyze them. It was incredibly fortunate that *The Tempest* was the play performed during the study, as the story and context explore concepts of placemaking, more than perhaps any other Shakespeare production. The activity of creating
something akin to a pirate/treasure map of an uncharted island seemed an appropriate, if not fruitful activity given the context of a shipwreck upon a magical island. It was Karen’s idea to have performers draw Prospero’s island from the point-of-view of their character. As Karen said in her interview, “everyone in the play is lost in some way.” Thus the idea of drawing maps as a way for performers to find themselves through place compelled me to explore creative mapping methods and theories.

Working in these three distinct emplaced modes allows me to build upon Hunter’s methodological work and apply it to collect and analyze data that would otherwise not be part of ethnographic research. Where Hunter used emplacement to study the ways individual naturalists made sense of place through emplaced stories, I examine the emplaced knowledge of an entire community. Furthermore, my ability to move within and between the modes of emic ethnographer, community member, and performing pedagogue—one who is immersed in the text of the play and the process of its performance—provides multifaceted ways of engaging with more-than-human participants and data.

Summary

In summary, three ethnographic techniques form the basis for assembling the primary record for this study: experiencing (participant-observation) in the form of video-captured SITA rehearsals, inquiring (interviewing), and examining (analyzing participant artifacts). I use conventional forms of mapmaking and map reading, particularly in companionship with participant interviews. I also used anti-cartographic (Ingold, 2011) or creative mapping techniques to visualize the imagined places and affectively charged data (St. Pierre, 1997) that are experienced and created by the SITA community. My use of emplaced ethnography also broadens the methods and techniques by attending to the emplacement of a community—not just individuals; how people move through place, the use of creative forms of mapping to understand people’s experience of place, emplaced modes of positionality and understanding as a researcher.
Chapter 4

Engagement with an Agentful Topography and the Place-based Community It Supports

Introduction

Chapter Four examines how the Arboretum as an agentful topography recruits or draws learners in and how this engagement supported SITA’s practices as a place-based community. Wenger defines engagement within a community as talking, making, and doing things together, or “learning what we can do and how the environment responds to our actions” (2010, p.4). The findings presented in this chapter explore how participants described their relationship with the Arboretum as a physical and social space to understand their emplaced engagement. I analyze how participants spoke about their membership in SITA and how their participation in the community’s placemaking influenced and contributed to their personal meaning-making with the Arboretum.

Before I lay out this chapter’s findings, I summarize my emplaced research mode and detail the methods I used to investigate questions of engagement. The chapter’s findings are divided into two parts. The first part focuses on individual engagement with the physical space of the Arboretum by analyzing annotated maps and interviews. The second part examines participants’ membership in SITA, including what they do and make together as a place-based community with the Arboretum.

My first research question is: How do the participants engage with the Arboretum as a physical-environmental space and as a member of the SITA community? Questions of engagement describe how people move through and inhabit the Arboretum, what activities they engage in, and how they talk about the Arboretum. I sought to answer the research question by engaging SITA members in conversations concerning the following topics.

a. Where do participants go in the Arboretum? Where are their favorite places? Are there places they avoid?
b. What do the participants do in the Arboretum?

c. How do participants understand and talk about the Arboretum?

d. How do participants conceptualize the Arboretum in relation to the surrounding areas of the university campus and city?

The data used to explore SITA members' engagement includes:

a) one-on-one interviews

b) walking-interviews (participant led walking routes and participant photos)

c) annotated visitor maps

Emplaced as an Emic Ethnographer

I took on the role of an emplaced emic ethnographer to understand members’ engagement and everyday experiences with the Arboretum. I examined the Arboretum as a physical environmental setting for participants’ socio-cultural activities and site of embodied experiences. My position was that of an emic researcher because I knew the Arboretum intimately, although it had been several years since I last visited. I was extremely familiar with the names of features in the Arboretum, the direction, and relations of trails and paths, as well as the flora and fauna that grew there. Furthermore, as an alumna of the university, I was familiar with the town and campus and its relation to the Arboretum. My emplacement also extended to SITA activities and productions. Therefore, throughout the interviews, I could rely on having some shared or similar experiences and mutual acquaintances as my participants. I especially leveraged my previous experience in performing or attending productions, which also facilitated a conversation with participants.

Understanding people’s everyday experience and meaning making with place. The interviews and annotated maps can best be understood through the cartographic reading of drift. A concept based on Debord’s psychogeography (1957) drift is a way to describe or map places that reveals people’s “street-level desires and perceptions rather than a synoptic totality” (Corner, 1999, p. 233). Thus
Drift combines elements of walking or pedestrian wayfaring with people’s relational and conceptual understanding of place. The goal of mapping and conversational exercises around participants’ relationship with the Arboretum was to locate and understand people’s play and representation with the everyday experiences.

The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 30-45 minutes. The interview had two foci. The first was participants’ relationship with the Arboretum as a place, both inside and outside of SITA activities. The other focus was more production and performance specific, discussing themes of the play, participants’ dramatic character, and membership to the SITA community. As part of the interview, participants annotated visitor maps. The maps acted as a conversational tool that allowed me to corroborate participants’ memories with the physical geography.

Therefore, when possible, I conducted walking-interviews where participants showed me their favorite or frequented trails and features. During the walking-interviews, I asked participants to take photographs of features or interactions that illustrated where and what in the Arboretum they felt strongly about or had a connection with. I conducted eighteen Arboretum-focused interviews, collected thirteen maps, and conducted six walking-interviews. Table 4-1 provides the names of the participants that engaged in the interviews and annotated mapping activities. Rich and Elliot were interviewed together as were Teddy and Scott. Meredith, Corryn, Teddy and Scott, Carl and Vivian participated in walking-interviews.

Table 4-1: Participants who completed interview and annotated map activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of data collected</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director Interviews</td>
<td>Karen, Malcolm, Mona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated maps</td>
<td>Corryn, Stanley, Veronica, Carl, Rich, Elliot, Charlie, Liza, Julia, Meredith, Keith, Kevin, Jake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this first analysis, my findings show four main themes: 1) Participants had clear preferred or favorite areas they visited often. 2) The Arboretum was a mixed-use place that supported multiple activities and forms of meaning-making. 3) Participants consistently perceived the Arboretum as a “separate” space from campus and city. 4) Dwelling (the prolonged and habitual inhabitation) in the Arboretum through SITA changed participants’ relationship and meaning-making with the place.

**Areas of Concentrated Affect: Participants’ Favorite Features in the Arboretum**

I asked participants about their favorite places to go or visit in the Arboretum. I directly asked them to mark their favorite spaces on the map. I also asked them to mark areas that had particular meanings, strong memories, and associations. From the transcribed interviews and maps, I counted the number of participants that talked specifically about areas in the Arboretum and marked these areas on their maps. Table 4-2 describes the popular and officially named spaces within the Arboretum and the number of participants that discussed or marked the areas.

**Table 4-2: Favorite Arboretum spaces accounted for in interviews and maps.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map Feature</th>
<th>Instances Marked as “Favorite Place”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heathdale</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Valley (labeled Hawthorn Valley on map)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Valley</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia Glen</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peony Garden</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Girl’s Glen</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphitheater</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nichols Drive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader’s Center</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants indicated the Heathdale, East Valley, and River to be highly affective and popular areas. Across the interviews, participants used highly positive and affective words like beautiful, magical, serene, peaceful, and open to describe the Arboretum’s landscape. When talking about the Heathdale, participants used multisensory language to describe the area’s particular quality of light, sounds, and smells. When discussing the river area, participants described how they enjoyed the sound of the water and the river’s movement. Although only three people (Jake, Charlie, and Joe) specifically related that the Prairie was one of their favorite areas, while Julia, Liza, Meredith, and Kevin indicated that they “don’t usually go” or are “not that familiar with” the Prairie. Participants had strong preferences about areas they enjoyed. These were spaces that they visited often, and used highly affective words to describe both the physical spaces and their reasons for frequenting them. This tendency was contrasted by how participants described areas that they were not familiar with. When asked why they visited some areas and not others, participants answered vaguely or related that it was just not part of their walking or visiting routine.

Although participants could usually locate their places using the map, it would take a few moments for participants to orient themselves. When using the map, some were surprised at the naming conventions because many participants had names for places and features that were different from what was on the map. For example, during Vivian’s interview, when walking through the Heathdale, she explained, “I didn’t know what it was called, I just called this area the tree pit.” These acts of naming capture participants’ tendency to personalize or inscribe the Arboretum’s space as their own by creating names or reframing spaces based on past experiences.

Evidence from walking-interviews. Through walking with my participants, I was able to share participants’ experiences and more fully understand the everyday relationships participants had with the Arboretum. Walking-interviews took on a special discursive quality as the participants and I walked and talked in ways that were not as structured as interviews that were conducted sedentarily. Walking-interviews meandered more topically but provided a more intimate understanding of what experiences people brought with them to the Arboretum. As part of the interview, I encouraged participants to take
pictures of what represented their relationship with the Arboretum, what they liked, or what they found interesting. Figure 4-1 provides the routes and paths that participants and I took during their interviews.

Two participants, Meredith and Carl, each lived near the edge of the Arboretum, but on opposite sides. They each chose to show me the paths they took to get to their homes and also marked the paths on their maps. During their separate interviews, they each joked about the Arboretum being like their backyard. Meredith and I walked the path that she took to go to her home, a path that I was unaware even existed. Carl and I followed the path he walked or biked to get to work from his home, which was located over the train tracks on the other side of the river. Carl’s trail at the time was full of white, pink, and purple wild phlox with dappled sunlight filtering through the trees. Reflecting on his relationship with the Arboretum he offered, “How can you be upset when this is your commute?” Carl spent his twenty-year career as a lighting designer for musical venues, and we talked at length about affect, mood, and how Carl was trained to use light to support musical performances. He explained how his training informed his appreciation of the Arboretum’s spaces—emphasizing the light and the aesthetic quality during our walk.
Teddy and Scott’s path led through the peony garden and then followed the boardwalk path to the river. When we arrived at the water, they animatedly described a tubing expedition down the river. Corryn also chose the path to the river where we discussed our love for being near the water, especially the Great Lakes. Corryn related how they wrote poetry and described how water, its movement, reflectivity, and light, served as inspiration. Corryn’s interview took us back to the East Valley, where we spent time sitting near the split tree. Vivian described memories of playing with a childhood friend (now deceased) near the cedar grove on the edge of the East Valley. Vivian disclosed how the area was very special because it reminded her of her friend, and shared “innocence… when you are a little kid” and how “that one moment, right there we were happy—just happy kids.” Walking-interviews elucidated participants’ prior experiences and relationships with friends, nature, and art that helped shape their relationship and meaning making with the Arboretum. Walking-interviews seemed to elicit more self-disclosure and place-associated drift (both in topics and in actual routes). Figure 4-2 provides a sample of the photos taken by participants during the walking-interviews which I layered on top of the interview route maps.
Although walking-interview participants took several photos each, I selected photos that were representative of their path and interview. For example, Meredith showed me a particular bench where she argued with a friend, explaining, “that bench was the cause of much sorrow.” Corryn took a picture of a favorite climbing tree by the river. While not exhaustive, Figure 4-2 does provide an impressionistic snap-shot of the Arboretum through the eyes and experiences of SITA members.

Participants also discussed and annotated particular spaces and objects within the featured or named areas in the Arboretum. For example, Julia marked her preferred reading and people-watching places on the map. Jake, who grew up in the town, marked his high school running route through the Arboretum. Overall, many participants described their favorite trails or routes, which often incorporated popular areas as part of their inscribed walking route or destination. Therefore, participants indicated that they liked to walk “along the river, or “through the Heathdale” and identified several areas along the paths, such as a particular tree or river rock outcropping that they enjoyed, or that served as areas of interest. These findings support Ingold’s conceptualization of place as being constituted along a line or path rather than a fixed point (2007). I also found that participants’ observations along trails represented a wayfaring perspective—present, mindful, and multisensory. When choosing trails and paths to follow, participants often selected the same paths routinely or out of habit.

The Arboretum as a Mixed-use Place that Supports Multiple Activities and Meaning-making

The next question I asked participants was, what do they do in the Arboretum outside of performing in the SITA shows? They described activities such as socializing/ hanging out with friends, playing Frisbee, reading, and walking. Participants related that it was a popular place to take visitors or people from out of town (such as students’ parents or friends from other universities). Other activities mentioned included sledding, running, meditating, participating in environmental education opportunities,
and using recreational drugs (smoking marijuana). The maps and interviews showed that people often engaged in similar activities in the same areas: picnicking in the peony garden, walking through the Heathdale, or reading near the river.

I also asked participants to describe and mark any areas on the map where they had a particularly strong memory because I wanted to understand their personal meanings and connections with the Arboretum beyond simply pleasure and displeasure. I wanted to know what specific sites were important to people and why—how they fit within participants’ larger stories of being at the university. Participants’ interviews and maps illustrated how the Arboretum supported multiple activities across time, a mix of everyday activities like walks, or special occasions such as first dates or birthdays. The most detailed annotated map came from Stanley, an alumnus, university professor, and longtime SITA member. In *The Tempest*, Stanley was double-cast along with Malcolm as Prospero, the protagonist of the play. During his interview, Stanley related that for him, “every inch of the Arb is imbued with meaning.” Stanley asked if he could take the map home and go through the mapping exercise thoroughly, explaining that after thirty years of dwelling in the Arboretum, it would take more time for him than for more novice participants.

Stanley was a student at the university in the mid-1980s and studied biology, pharmacy, literature, and Latin. His map (Figure 4-3) is a testament to his various studies, interests, and pursuits. During his interview, we sat watching the other performers rehearsing in the East Valley. Stanley vividly described a particular day in 1986. He was nominated to deliver the graduation address, and he spent a whole day in the East Valley memorizing and practicing the speech. Stanley’s earliest annotated date was “1982 medieval festival.” Many of his annotations are related to walks: *morning walks 1983-84, snowy walks 1996-?, walks with Stacey (wife) 2010, chased by an owl c.a. 1987.*” Stanley’s map includes memories from his coursework and teaching: the river area near the prairie was the site of his “Botany plant identification class 1986,” while upriver near the waterfront landing, he collaborated on an “algae gathering project in 2014.” Even before SITA, Stanley had been a part of theatrical and artistic productions in the Arboretum as evidenced by “rehearsal in the rain ‘As You Like It’ 1995.” On his map,
Stanley recorded eight SITA productions and three Shakespeare Scenes (a smaller, more exploratory outgrowth of SITA).

Stanley’s map is an example of how the Arboretum can be conceived as a “fully lived space” and how people build meaning and make sense of the places they choose to inhabit (Ellsworth, 2005, Ingold, 2011). Over time the members build up complicated associations and mental maps that span memories, feelings, and activities. These also include somatically charged observations and perceptions.
Figure 4-3: Stanley’s annotated visitor map. Stanley recorded more than 30 years of memories and experiences ranging from personal walks, performances, and academic research sites.
Figure 4-4: Liza’s annotated map. Liza’s map records SITA-related activities and those with family and friends.
Liza’s map provides a parallel example of a novice map (Figure 4-4) to Stanley’s senior Arboretum experiences. Although the two members have a different temporal quantity depicted by the maps, the kinds of affective qualities of the annotations were similar.

Liza, a junior in college, and first time SITA participant, provided personal details about a time that she shared with her family, “Nicholas Drive Entrance: Brought my family here to wander and explore first month of school,” and time with friends: “Riverfront Landing: Got my friends lost here, climbed a huge tree-pure joy being there w/ them.” She also noted SITA Tempest related places, “Trail into Heathdale: Stairs that Ariels crawled on the first day of rehearsal.” Liza described the quality of light on her map, using highly descriptive and affective language, “There is a certain path of trees between main and East Valley where the light streams in golden rods at sunset.” Despite not being as full of memories as Stanley’s map, Liza’s map is an eclectic mix, chronicling events and capturing moments of intense affect: “pure joy” and “light as golden rods” stand out as almost poetic.

Stanley’s and Liza’s annotations across both time and space provide strong examples of how everyday interactions, memories, and interests create a meshwork of place. These maps begin to show how past actions in particular places, although invisible to others, leave imprints that people carry with them through to the present. Furthermore, mapping in conjunction with interviews provides a methodological insight into how ethnographic maps can help make such data visible with places like the Arboretum that are imbued with multilayered meanings.

The Arboretum as a “separate” space from campus and city. I wanted to understand how SITA participants conceived of the Arboretum as a particular kind of place within or outside the university. As part of the interview, I asked participants how they viewed the Arboretum in relationship to surrounding areas: Did they consider it as part of the university? A campus space? Part of the town? Or something else? Asking how participants categorized the Arboretum in relation to other places allowed me to identify the nuanced ways participants understood the Arboretum as a constructed socio-material
space. This question was also informed by asking participants to relate their experiences with the Arboretum both during and outside of SITA activities.

Twelve-year-old Elliot described the Arboretum as a “totally different world” while his father, Rich, viewed the Arboretum as a quintessential feature of the town. Several participants wavered between these categorizations, as exemplified by Charlie’s interview:

*Jaclyn*: So when you’re in the Arboretum, do you feel like you’re still within the University? Do you feel like you’re within [City Name]? Or is it a different place?

*Charlie*: I mean, when I’m in the Main Valley or around the amphitheater, where there are crowds ... I’m writing crowds here ... (writes on map) of people playing Ultimate Frisbee or whatever, then I do still feel like I’m very much within a college town. But around these sort of more isolated expanses that are kind of less sexy, it feels a little more like what it’s supposed to be, ideally.

*Jaclyn*: So what do you think it’s supposed to be?

*Charlie*: Just sort of ... I keep saying untamed. I really should have found better adjectives....Just really pristine expanse of nature, that sort of feels removed from civilization.

Like Charlie, other participants described the Arboretum in similar terms, as a natural or wild space, using words like “oasis, escape, or retreat” from the “hustle and bustle of town” or from the stress of academics.
and classes. Most participants described the Arboretum as a “separate place.” For example, Julia compared campus green spaces such as the quad, to the Arboretum. She said that the Arboretum had a separate purpose that was more public and open, and it was utilized by the larger community. Julia explained that while a family might walk around campus or city proper, the Arboretum was more conducive to family activities such as strolling or playing. Julia related that although the campus and city were designed for students and city business, “this space is more for everybody.” Across the interviews, participants described the Arboretum as a special place that afforded a change, shift, or escape from the city, academic activities, and university environments. Participants described the Arboretum using highly affective language, reflecting their appreciation of having a retreat and open public area.

SITA changed participants’ relationship with the Arboretum. I asked participants if their experience with SITA changed their relationship with the Arboretum. Malcolm, Julia, Scott, Teddy, Charlie, and Mona all described how at first the Arboretum seemed vast, a place in which they could easily get lost. Through SITA activities, participants often discovered their own trails. While path discovery allowed participants to get to their scenes in the play without being detected, the experience also provided them with a level of intimacy and comfort with the Arboretum. Charlie’s reaction is an example of someone who enjoyed “getting lost” in the Arboretum.

Charlie: When I was younger, my father would take me to the Arb a lot when I was a child. I’d go with my two other brothers. And it seemed like this really sort of limitless kind of untamed expanse, which it isn’t at all. I mean, it’s a really well-crafted illusion, the entire construction of the Arb. But as I’ve done more and more shows in the Arb, and I’ve sort of had to become familiar with the lay of the land, through necessity, it’s really become very unmysterious to me, in a way that kind of saddens me a little bit, because I like to get lost and it’s becoming increasingly difficult to do that in the Arb.
This statement illustrates how as Charlie increasingly spent time in the Arboretum as an adult and SITA member, the Arboretum became less a “limitless kind of untamed expanse” and more domesticated as evidenced by Charlie’s understanding of the “lay of the land.” Stanley’s understanding of the Arboretum as a complicated and nuanced web of meaning, where “every inch is imbued with meaning,” is contrasted by Charlie’s perspective of the Arboretum as an increasingly known and less mysterious quantity. Charlie’s relationship with the Arboretum as a familiar space rendered it a little less exciting, smaller, and more contained than his earlier childhood understanding of the space.

**SITA influenced people’s appreciation for the natural environment.** I asked participants if they considered themselves to be a “nature person” broadly construed because SITA members spend a great deal of time outdoors in inclimate weather and off trails during rehearsals and performances. Most participants easily identified with the label and explained various ways they formed this identity: being out in nature in the form of hiking, camping, kayaking, hunting, and fishing, appreciating nature, generally being outside, reading nature-focused literature, and knowing the names of birds and plants. From the eighteen SITA members that were interviewed, only two, Mona and Violet, related that they did not identify with the label of “nature people.” However, some participants described how being part of SITA as a place-based community sparked an affinity for being in nature.

This finding was best exemplified by university students Scott and Teddy’s joint interview. Good friends Scott and Teddy, who were cast as Stephano and Trinculo (also friends in the play) described how their familiarity and comfort with nature changed during their SITA experience. Teddy related that before SITA, he did not consider himself to be a nature person. However, being in the Arboretum, and specifically in SITA’s outdoor rehearsals and performances, subjected them to extended periods of being outdoors and in the landscape. Consequently, through what Teddy and Scott described as “forced exposure,” the two were challenged by the environment (often muddy or near bugs) and came to tolerate, if not enjoy it.
Teddy: I think I didn’t consider myself a nature person. Before I did Arb [SITA], I didn’t like to even sit on the grass for fear of being dirty. Now, I ... whenever I have time, I’ll go on a hike at least once a week. I love to just sit outside, so I don’t think... I’m not the kind of person like Veronica, one of the Ariels is like, very one with nature and has twigs in her hair. I’m not there, but I’ve learned to like ... I really thrive off of sunlight. Sitting in the grass and stuff like that is something I’ve kind of really realized I need...My parents never let me play in the dirt or the mud or stuff like that. I think it was just kind of that breakthrough forcing me to come back from rehearsals and I’d be covered in dirt. In the rain, I’d be so filthy. It was one of the things where once I kinda passed that threshold, I was like, “Ugh! This is nothing. I like it.” So, I think it was exposure, and also it was like forced exposure, kind of. Yeah. Karen [the director] being like, “We’re still gonna do the show in the rain, guys. I was like, “Oh, what?”

Scott: Yeah. I’m still kind of squeamish if they’re [the directors] like, “Lie in the tall grass.” I’m like- “There are going to be spiders all over me,” but no, I feel exactly the same [as Teddy]. .... It really forces you, and once you’re used to it through that conditioning, [being in the Arboretum], it becomes a place that you just have to keep coming back to. And I think that’s good.

This exchange exemplifies how participants viewed the Arboretum as a place that recruited them (“you just have to keep going back”) and as a force that actively works on people to “pass the threshold” by inviting and evoking participants to change their attitudes and perceptions. Teddy and Scott’s comments hint that they recognized a sliding scale of nature-personhood. Botany major Veronica, who often would put leaves, flowers, and sticks in her hair and rehearse barefoot, represented a more intense level of
nature-participation alluded to by Teddy’s statement “I’m not there yet.” However, through SITA’s activities, as Teddy and Scott explained, how SITA activities and the Arboretum “conditions you” by challenging participants to be better performers, to be more accepting of the unknown, or even to become more of a “nature person” who is willing to step into new experiences like enjoying a summer rain amidst practicing for an upcoming performance.

The interviews with Charlie, Teddy, and Scott demonstrate how established members’ attitudes were closely knit to their SITA experiences, how they thought about the Arboretum, and how they felt in it. Therefore, in the second half of this chapter, I expand on these ideas of how SITA’s activities as a place-based community mediate peoples’ engagement and identity with the Arboretum.

**Engagement with SITA as a Place-Based Community of Learning**

The second part of this chapter explores how participants described their engagement with SITA as a place-based community, specifically how SITA’s collaborative placemaking praxis mediated their meaning-making and relationship with the Arboretum. To address this aspect of engagement in terms of community, I asked questions such as: how and why were they drawn to SITA community and productions? How did they understand their membership and define participation in the community’s activity? What did they learn from being and working in the space?

During the interviews, I asked participants about their academic major, profession, and connection with the university. Next, I asked how they became involved with the SITA productions and how many shows they had done. I also asked participants about their favorite role or play and about what they learned from the space.

**SITA as an open and collaborative community.** The SITA community was very diverse and open regarding membership. Although it began as a student-focused, academic endeavor, it has grown over the years to incorporate people from across the university and the outside community. What made the SITA community unique was its relatively flat structure, meaning that there are few hierarchical
layers of power and decision making. This structure was partly due to the constant influx of university students and their subsequent graduation. Participants recognized that the SITA community was unique at the university as evidenced by Scott and Teddy’s description of its members.

Teddy: I think it is a privilege to be in this community where other people see this as like, “Oh, that’s a person that’s like an authority member... I’m just like, “No! These are just cool people doing cool things with me.”

Teddy described the interaction with other community members as a “privilege,” alluding to the notion that most undergraduate students do not experience such collaboration in their informal learning and social environments. Similarly, Scott related how in his first SITA production he was double cast with an acting major from the theater school (a very competitive and prestigious program), which Scott described as being “intimidating” at first. However, Scott felt that SITA served as a safe and welcoming community:

Scott: It’s really cool ‘cause you do have the mix of -- students, and people who are trying theater for the first time, and theater professionals. There really isn’t a hierarchy of what I think, the only way that there is one is just returning people just all get to know each other, and so there is a kind of community that forms there. I think it was very welcoming for me when I first came in and I hope it continues to be.

Unlike other communities that are linked with the university, in SITA hierarchal roles are often obscured as faculty and students work and play (in the ludic and theatrical sense) alongside each other. While Scott’s statement described the diversity of acting experience and skills, the SITA community was
also diverse in life experience and learning trajectories. Several novice performers such as Carl, a 64-year-old staff member, and Joe, a combat veteran and returning student, both separately stated that they viewed SITA as a safe and fun environment to develop their acting experience.

**Case Studies of Engagement with the Arboretum and SITA community**

Participants became involved with the SITA through different means and as they pursued various interests. Common ways that participants sought membership was through friends who were members, general interest in acting, interest in Shakespeare, interest in being outdoors, and attendance at previous shows. I selected four cases of focal members from the eighteen interviewed to more deeply understand participants’ relationship with the Arboretum and their membership in SITA. The five individuals (Table 4-3) were selected because they represent a diversity of participants and experiences within the community, ranging from a founding member to first-time performer.

Table 4-3: Focal case studies and participant information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th><em>Tempest</em> Role</th>
<th>Member Type(s)</th>
<th>No. of productions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm</td>
<td>Prospero / co-director</td>
<td>Founding Member, Alumnus, Faculty</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>King Alonso</td>
<td>Alumnus, Faculty, Family (Dad)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot</td>
<td>Cabin boy</td>
<td>Middle-schooler, Family (Son)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona</td>
<td>Ariel director</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malcolm was chosen because he was a founding member of SITA and continues to perform, direct, and mentor novice members. Rich and Elliot (considered a single case) are a father and middle-school-aged son who demonstrate how they consider participating in SITA a family activity. Jake and Mona’s cases demonstrate the range of experience among university students who are the majority of SITA’s participants: Jake as a novice and Mona as a more experienced performer who intentionally sought mentorship from senior members (Malcolm) to improve her directing craft. These cases illustrate
the complex, subtle, and diverse ways that SITA members identify with, talk about, and make meaning with the Arboretum, mediated through SITA’s placemaking.

**Malcolm: Seeding, growing, and cultivating a place-based community.** Malcolm was part of SITA’s inception. The first production, he said, felt like it was “a scrappy bunch of kids” who went out in the Arboretum “to do this crazy thing” with “no idea what we were doing or if we could pull it off.”

According to Malcolm, the whole “adventure,” as he calls it, began with a lack of space. Malcolm, a student, and Karen, his professor/director, were forced to stage their play in the courtyard of the residence hall because the theater spaced was already booked. Then an Arboretum administrator, impressed by the outdoor staging, approached Karen and asked her to do something in the Arboretum. Karen saw it as an interesting creative opportunity and a solution to finding a performance venue because, according to Malcolm, “we couldn’t even get space in our own theater to do drama stuff, so we decided to embark on this adventure.”

Malcolm was currently a professor of neuroscience at a nearby university. He was an undergraduate at the University, attended NYU for theater, and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan. He has been in twelve out of the sixteen seasons. For the 2017 production, Malcolm played the protagonist, Prospero, and co-directed the show with Karen, the senior director and founding faculty of SITA. Malcolm has played many roles in his time with SITA, including Benvolio from *Twelfth Night*, Benedict from *Much Ado about Nothing*, and Leontes in *Winter’s Tale*, but his first was also one of his favorites, Oberon, King of the Fairies from *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

I asked Malcolm about his relationship with the Arboretum before his involvement with SITA. His first visit was during his freshman orientation. He related that at the time the Arboretum was “a little overwhelming,” as “it seemed too big and confusing.” Other than a few dates during the day, Malcolm would usually frequent the space at night, despite the Arboretum being closed after sundown. “People said, ‘you can’t go to the Arboretum at night it is dangerous’ so of course, that’s when I would go. Back
then it was more wild, tangled and messy.” After the first SITA production, Malcolm had a sense of ownership of the Arboretum and also a duty to invite others to share in the world the performers created.

*Malcolm:* It became this thing where we almost felt like we were *stewards of, and guardians of,* and responsible for glorifying the Arb because it was this thing that we had *created this magical thing* and we wanted people to be into it and seeing it and everything. So, telling everybody, “Oh my God, you’ve got to come to the Arb. You’ve gotta see this show.”

Malcolm saw his role as one of stewardship both towards the Arboretum and the SITA community through encouraging people to visit the Arboretum, see the shows, and support other forms of creative community engagement through the Arboretum.

When I asked Malcolm to talk about his favorite places in the Arboretum, he described three areas: the Heathdale, a huge log in Magnolia Valley, and the East Valley. Both the Heathdale and the East Valley were also included as areas within the play-route of the 2017 *Tempest* production.

One of Malcolm’s favorite places, or what he described as “one of the most magical” in the Arboretum was the Heathdale. Its winding trails lead into a small valley that recreates an Appalachian mountain habitat with hardwoods and rhododendrons. This area was where Malcolm, along with the first SITA cast, devised the staging for the scene in *Midsummer* where Oberon first confronts Titania, Queen of the fairies. Another of Malcolm’s favorite places was a large fallen tree in the Magnolia Valley, which was longer there at the time of the study.

*Malcolm:* That log which was there was this big giant dead tree and I *had so many memories* of learning lines walking up and down that thing, and setting scenes around it, and ways that *we’d*
used it once and then ten years later we come back, and we use it the same way, and it’s the same jokes and everything. It was a gathering place, a location, a fixture, and then it fell apart. Literally fell apart.

Figure 4-5: Malcolm as Benedict in Much Ado about Nothing. Malcolm leaning against the log that was no more in the Magnolia Valley (Phot credit: 2013, SITA Facebook page).

The physical log and all the comedic slapstick routines SITA members built around it were part of the community’s institutional memory. So, despite the play being performed, there was a repertoire of interactions built around the from which to draw upon.

Over time, the log decomposed. Therefore, the log is emblematic of the everchanging quality of the Arboretum. Furthermore, many memories were strongly tied to elements that may no longer be there. Malcolm related that there were several special areas that have since vanished or been pruned back.

“Even the way that the Arb looks now is different from how it was when we started. It was more rugged then, it’s been more cultivated now, the darker spaces have been pruned out, so it’s more visitor-friendly, a little less dangerous.”
This statement illustrates that the Arboretum as a dynamic system was constantly changing. Due in part to the popularity of SITA’s productions, the Arboretum became more cultivated as the university and community invested time and resources into its maintenance and accessibility to diverse visitors.

**Placemaking and community building.** Malcolm’s initial feeling of ownership that he felt as a student has matured into sophisticated stewardship, not just of the Arboretum but of SITA as a community:

Malcolm: **I feel very connected to The Arb.** It’s one of my favorite places. It does feel like an extension of the university because it’s protecting The Arb and protecting our opportunities here is part of **being stewards** at the university... So, in that sense you get a sense of ownership, you are aware of its place in the university and also community-wide. **That the Shakespeare in the Arb is a community institution. And it’s taken on a life of its own,** well beyond the university.

Malcolm offers a unique perspective as a founding member of SITA. He has matured into his role as a senior performer, mentor, and steward of the Arboretum. Similarly, through the years, Malcolm has helped shape this small place-based community into a community institution, one that adds to the character of the university and the city.

**The need to keep experimenting and exploring.** Malcolm described the difficulty of keeping SITA’s staging exciting and fresh, explaining that adventure and discovery are at the heart of the SITA experience. Malcolm described the previous year’s production, 2016 *Midsummer*, as one of his favorite experiences in the past seventeen years because it captured the same feelings of excitement and discovery as the initial production. One experience that Malcolm cited as an opportunity for experimentation was shared with Mona (one of the other focal participants) the previous year. Malcolm and Mona referred to
this playful exercise as H2Oberon (a play on words of H2O, i.e., water and Oberon.) One day, some of the cast members gathered for fun to try different stagings of the play. Mona was among the performers.

Malcolm: We came one day, and I said [to Mona] “You can be Oberon, but you can’t use any of the places we’ve ever used for this play.” So like, let’s go do this show. We ended up trying all these different, weird backwoods places...I would love to see the play they put together because it not only forced us to reimagine the staging, but it led to re-imagining these characters and the story that we’re telling in a way that was legitimate, but also so different from this play that we’ve been doing for 20 years.

Malcolm related that he has been advocating for new ways to push the boundaries of what has already been tried, “otherwise we are not growing, I think it important to keep growing as the space keeps growing.”

The next case I examine is Mona, the member whom Malcolm began mentoring as a river-inspired Oberon. Mona as Malcolm’s mentee was a reflection of what his seventeen years in the Arboretum means and what knowledge and insights he can pass on. Although I treat them as two separate cases, both interviews describe the same experience of the Midsummer river restaging. Mona’s case continues the theme of experimenting and discovering with places as well as community building.

Mona: Experimenting with place to hone her craft. Mona was between her junior and senior year and was a double major in English and neuro-psychology. Mona’s first SITA production was Midsummer 2016 where she played one of three Pucks, mischievous fawn-like characters. Mona expressed an interest in learning more about the directing process and craft. Malcolm mentored her during the production. For the 2017 Tempest, she was a co-director alongside Malcolm and Karen. During his interview, Malcolm described the 2016 Midsummer as one of his favorite productions “because we had a
great cast especially Pucks (including Mona), who would do anything and were up for trying new things.” Malcolm and Mona continued their mentor/mentee relationship in *The Tempest* production, with Mona specifically working with the Ariel performers and musicians.

Although Mona enjoyed hiking and has camped and kayaked with her family, she did not view herself as an “outdoorsy person,” preferring to find comfort and respite in her room or a coffee shop. She explained that her favorite place in the Arboretum was the tree near the river where she had staged the H2Oberon scenes: “I actually was having a panic attack in my women’s rights class and like walked the entire way to that tree and just stood there, so I really, really like that place.” Her other favorite part of the Arboretum was near the Oberon tree because the previous year as Pucks, “we’d have to spend twenty minutes doing back flips while the audience filtered in.”

I asked Mona how working in a space like the Arboretum informed her performing and directing practice: “The space teaches you to adapt. And the space teaches you to interact with everything from the get-go.” Mona then explained that performing in the Arboretum was different from conventional theater where performers would begin rehearsing with an empty stage. Not until the end of the rehearsal would a set and props be available so, “You learn with approximations until you get the set and sort of work yourself into it. This, you start with it--utilize it right from the beginning.” This statement illustrated how there was an immediacy and immersiveness to the Arboretum as a stage, which is not typical in other kinds of productions. Mona related that the greatest challenge of directing such a production was also the source of most excitement. She explained how the variables ranged from human to non-human and how the SITA experience taught her to be more comfortable with uncertainty and also to embrace it. Mona related that much of her learning and growth as a director happened outside the Arboretum and after rehearsals, talking with friends who were in the show (including Malcolm), deconstructing and analyzing how rehearsals went. She was similar to Malcolm in that she enjoyed planning the structure and logistics for new creative endeavors in the community. Although fun and play were important, both Malcolm and Mona focused on method and spent their time planning and strategizing for current and future shows.
When I asked Mona if her relationship with the Arboretum had changed from her SITA experience, she described how she was much more familiar with the physical space and its landmarks. Because of the production, Mona spent a great deal of time in the Arboretum. Mona and I calculated that during rehearsals she spent between 9-12 hours a week for five weeks in the Arboretum, which totals about 50-60 hours. Performances easily added another 50-60 hours or more, meaning that in the span of three months, Mona was in the Arboretum for almost 120 hours. That is a large portion of time to be outside, especially if one does not identify themselves as Mona describes it, as “an outdoorsy kinda person.” Before being in SITA, Mona would only occasionally visit the Arboretum. Now she comes on her free time, often accompanying Malcolm to plan and sketch out the possibility for the next year’s productions.

*Improvising with place leads to transformation.* Both Mona and Malcolm separately described an episode during the previous year’s production of *Midsummer* where they and a few friends experimented with the spaces and scenes outside of the production. Mona, Malcolm, and other SITA friends began exploring different and more intimate spaces to stage the play. One of these scenes was played by the river, referred to by Malcolm and Mona as H2Oberon. Both Mona and Malcolm spoke animatedly about this experience. Malcolm described finding “completely new spaces and staging that would take your breath away.” Mona had wanted to try and play the character of Oberon, partly as a challenge and partly for fun. Despite learning all the Oberon lines, she never got the chance to perform, so Mona used this opportunity to explore playing Oberon in a new space. Mona described how playing at the river provided a more lush, almost tropical area, which was very different from the woodsy part of the Heathdale. This episode illustrates SITA members’ wayfaring approach to discovering new areas that activate strong affective and imaginative engagement and shows how informal experimentation with place supports new understandings of the text, place, and ways of being.

I asked how this new staging changed or supported her approach to playing Oberon. “We did the first couple of scenes with a gender-flipped Oberon in the river, and the idea behind that was that Oberon
was in charge of like water and of like caretaking of this sort of lush tropical space and then Titania was from a more like grounded rougher space.” Because Mona and fellow performers played the scene with inverted genders, they had to make necessary character adjustments, so the scene maintained a tension of personalities as well as an elemental tension (wet vs. dry, male vs. female, high vs. low). Mona explained that “I didn’t have the physical stature to make intimidating Oberon work,” meaning that she was not tall and imposing. So, instead, Mona tried to play the character with an emotional draw rather than through sheer presence and stature, which was generally how Malcolm played the role. Mona described how the re-gendered and river staging also changed how the characters treated the landscape: “Oberon was like much more like empathetic and was more careful. We needed everything to be protected,” while Titania was more sexually promiscuous, selfish, and destructive. The performers played it as if Titania “didn’t care about the earth and would pull up plants and throw them around. She was just very flippant about everything.”

The H2Oberon episode that Malcolm and Mona related underlies how the Arboretum could support not just one staging or imagining of a play but manifold possibilities. Mona describes using the landscape to begin improvising characters’ needs, desires, and attitudes. The episode exemplifies how discovery and experimentation with place were at the heart of the SITA activities.

**Finding one’s place in the community.** Mona emphasized the importance of community membership, citing her relationship with Malcolm and friendship with other SITA members. She credited the SITA experience with helping her overcome her shyness and difficulty talking with others in the production: “I did not walk with anybody anywhere, I just like hid myself.” Mona described how at first she felt like an outsider in a community that was already established, “there’s no way, I’m just so small, I’m not there yet.” Mona credits Malcolm with helping her integrate into the community. Eventually, Mona did talk to people and became an important member of the community. She took pride in her ability to bring a lot of energy to a scene, her willingness to experiment or do acrobatic stunts or creative movement. She explained how she strove to be “productive and therefore valuable to the community. Just
being part of something and throwing yourself into it really helps you feel more comfortable in communities and feel more in control of the space.” In her second year with SITA, Mona took on an important leadership position as co-director.

**Rich and Elliot: Experiencing and placemaking in the Arboretum as a family.** SITA has always been a family-oriented community, and Rich and Elliot exemplify how SITA recruited members by appealing to various interests and experiences. Rich and Elliot are father and son. Elliot was considered an experienced SITA performer even at twelve years old. Rich, Elliot’s father, was a novice performer. Rich was a professor at the university and had also completed his graduate studies at the university. They were not the only parent-child pair in the 2017 season; a high school senior Violet (Ariel) and her father (musician) were also in the production together.

Elliot debuted in SITA in 2010 as a child fairy in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. At age twelve and in sixth grade, he was a SITA expert, despite being the youngest cast member in *The Tempest*. Elliot was thoughtful and took a professional approach to acting. He was also accomplished at the classical guitar, which he played in the show. The previous year, Elliot played the pageboy Moth in *Love’s Labor’s Lost* and got to learn stage fighting, sword fighting, and tumbling. He also brought his dad along to be a performer. Rich did not have much theater experience and was never involved with acting until his son showed an interest. In *The Tempest*, Rich had a large role as the King of Florence, one of the “shipwrecked dudes.”

As a family, (along with mom and sister) Rich and Elliot enjoyed going hiking, camping, and participating in other outdoor activities. Rich mentioned that he and Elliot often saw deer during SITA performances and rehearsals. He enjoyed observing the animals, especially the hawks, woodchucks, and deer that are prevalent in the East Valley. Rich said he sees the Arboretum as a quiet place of observation and reflection, but more importantly, he viewed their shared SITA endeavor as designated bonding time.
Rich: For me, that’s one of the **best things about it is getting to spend time**, at least a couple hours a day, three days a week and sometimes it can be four hours three days a week, with Elliot in the Arb, which we both love. That’s really one of the total highlights for me... Even last year, my roles were very minor, and I had a lot of downtime at rehearsals...But it was just such a pleasure to be here and to be with Elliot here, that it was totally worth it and totally fun. As much as I love the outdoors, there’s just so much that keeps us from necessarily taking the time to get out there. So this was enforced outdoor time, and I’m like, “Yeah, you can enforce that on me anytime.” That’s great.

Elliot: Must go out more, seriously!

Rich and Elliot’s shared time in rehearsal and in performances often includes a great deal of down-time as they wait for their scenes or watch other groups perform. But Rich said he does not mind waiting because to him it was “enforced outdoor time” away from computers, cell phones, or household duties. Similarly, SITA gives the father and son impetus to bond at home away from the Arboretum. “We spend a lot of time at home working on lines, blocking, reading the play together and talking about it.” This statement illustrates how SITA activities were not bound by the Arboretum but extend into other places such as the family home.

When I asked Rich and Elliot whether they conceived of the Arboretum as part of the university, city, or something else, each gave a very different response. Elliot considered the Arboretum as a “totally different world, even just the temperature, it’s often cooler. Not just in the woods, but in the whole Arb.” Elliot explained that in some parts of the Arboretum you can still see buildings like the hospital, but there are other spaces where no structures are visible, relating, “that’s when you are really in the Arb.” Elliot related that it was not like his backyard because it was wilder and full of “nature like trees and plants and
animals.” Rich, on the other hand, was quite aware of the Arboretum connection to the university and town, partly due to his professional relationship with the university. However, the Arboretum also feels to Rich, “like this wonderful oasis.” Rich went on to explain, “I’m aware of being in Ann Arbor, yet it feels like a very different space.” This sentiment also manifested into feelings of appreciation: “Wow, the university provides this space. That’s really cool. In that sense, yeah, I feel like it’s part of the university, but a very publicly open, accessible Arb.” Rich’s understanding of the Arboretum as mixed-use public and community space was partly mediated by his university position and long affiliation with the university. Elliot saw the Arboretum as a play space that was a different world from his school, town, or back yard. For Elliot, the Arboretum was a place that supported adventure, with plenty of hiding places and areas to explore. At the same time, Rich also saw the Arboretum as a place big enough to have adventures but familiar and safe enough for Elliot to have a wide degree of freedom of movement and agency, “If he got lost, he has a good head on his shoulders and could find his way out.”

Rich and Elliot’s experience as a family provides a direct example of Julia’s observation of how families and community members used the space. The Arboretum supported families, social groups, and other community members to gather, learn, and play in ways that were different from activities supported by other university and city spaces, such as large sporting events, or student-focused events like parades or rallies. Therefore the ‘separateness’ of the Arboretum lent itself to a different kind of ‘togetherness’.

Rich and Elliot are examples of how the SITA community, like the Arboretum, was open and supportive of community and family participation. Although the main goal of SITA was “to put on a show,” Rich viewed the most significant benefit of the experience as bonding outdoors with his son, while Elliot enjoyed “hanging out with all these different and cool people.” Rich and Elliot’s case also provides an example of how traditional hierarchal roles could be obscured or dissolved within the SITA community.

Jake: Finding new ways of moving and sensing with the Arboretum. Jake played one of seven Ariels (there were eleven Ariel performers, but only seven performed on any given night). A town
resident, Jake was going into his senior year as a bio-psychology major and Japanese language minor. *Tempest* was his first SITA production. He became involved because he took an acting class and made friends with two other performers in the show who told him about auditions. Although he stated in his interview that he was not an experienced stage performer, he was comfortable in front of an audience, given his musical experience playing violin and drums and being praise team leader at his church.

Before becoming a university student, Jake only came to the Arboretum a few times with his high school cross-country team. As a freshman at the university, Jake often came to the Arboretum with his friends because his dormitory was located near the entrance. He spent time socializing, playing Frisbee in the Main Valley, and walking near the railroad tracks and prairie. One of his favorite areas was the Prairie, because, as he explained, “I love wide-open places.” Jake connected his affinity to the prairie with running through it and watching the wind moving through the grass. Jake mentioned that he liked plants, although he did not know any of their names. He related that he was not interested in gardening, as it was too “constructed.” This place-attachment to wide-open places shaped his conceptualization of the Arboretum as being “wilder” than a park. Jake’s rationale for this conception of the Arboretum was that there were no paved sidewalks or built structures like a playground as would be typically found in a park. Additionally, the Arboretum provided a wider variety of flora and fauna than a park.

Along the route of the play, Jake described two areas with which he developed a relationship. The first area was in front of the Oberon tree to the left of the boardwalk, where the first scene takes place. Jake related there was a space of fifty square feet of ground that he “knows so well.” It was muddy, with thick clumps of grass protruding. The Ariel performers spent a great deal of rehearsal and performance time there, and Jake was challenged by the space:

*Jake:* I was not expecting to be a mud person. If I hadn’t been Ariel, that [area] would not have been significant, I would have avoided it. Some parts of the ground are muddier than others, and you have to read the space and look at the weather-get a feel for where you can step and where you can’t.
The second space was the split tree in the East Valley, or what the cast referred to as the Ariel tree. Jake reiterated how he spent a long time “working with the tree” and trying to see it through a “non-human, Ariel perspective” and how this way of perceiving changed his knowledge and feelings towards it: “I know the structure of this tree because we are on it all the time, and where the knobs are, and where I can climb up. It got personal.” Jake also liked a particular group of flowering trees a few yards from the split tree—the area where he gave Ariel’s line “-thou liest” when his character Ariel was tricking the fools. “I love this smell- it’s minty, and the smell permeates the valley.”

This statement shows how Jake’s perception and knowledge of the Arboretum was expanded through his SITA participation. Although a common visitor to the Arboretum, Jake, especially as a runner, mostly moved quickly through it. While he would run with his team, he was preoccupied with keeping a steady breath and pace. Moving through the Arboretum in this way did not allow him to experience prolonged and sustained inhabitation in one particular area. In contrast, inhabiting the Arboretum as Ariel, Jake was able to observe and understand more details about the space by getting “personal.”

**Communicating character and place through gesture and movement.** Of all the characters in *The Tempest*, Ariel was most tied to nature, being the personification of magic on the island. The Ariel performers spent a great deal of rehearsal time talking through and experimenting with how to communicate Ariel’s elemental being. I asked Jake how he prepared for playing a non-human (or more-than-human) character. He cited Ariel’s description in the text as a wind spirit and explained how that would effect the Ariels’ movement and ability to travel the island and waters. Jake described how the Ariels’ movement around the island [Arboretum] was not the same as if he [Jake] were to run across the Arboretum during his cross-country training. Instead Jake said that an Ariel “flows”—a word Mona also used to describe the Ariels’ movement. Jake related how this idea of flowing movement was part of his process of playing Ariel as a more-than-human entity. Jake felt that Ariel contributed the most to the island mysticism: “I think Ariel sets the mood of the island and is behind all the cool things on the
island.” This insight illustrates that Jake understood his dramatic responsibility to embody the island and therefore, the Arboretum.

During the first rehearsal, Jake and his fellow Ariel performers practiced moving and dancing. One exercise Jake particularly enjoyed was when the group experimented with movements that imitated birds. Based on this experience, Jake began watching break dancing videos and experimenting with moves such as “popping and locking” to expand his style and range of movement as Ariel. Jake explained that previously, he did not think of himself as a ‘dancer’ but as a ‘mover.’ However, playing Ariel in the Arboretum provided Jake with an occasion to use and move his body in ways that were novel to him. Jake also cited the way the prairie grass moved as a source of inspiration. In this way, Ariel’s oneness with the island paralleled Jake’s sense of movement, freedom, and openness when he was in the prairie. Playing Ariel allowed him to reexamine his affinity for the Arboretum’s prairie area. Even though it was not used in this particular production, Jake used his place affinity, along with his imaginative engagement, as a meaning-making tool to draw inspiration for his character. Similarly, his Ariel experiences prompted him to see himself as a dancer for the first time.

When I asked Jake what he learned from being in the production and from the space, he said, “there are parts of my body that I’ve never used before.” This realization can be understood as a parallel to Jake’s new knowledge of the Arboretum. Slowing down, concentrating on small movements or a small area such as a tree trunk or patch of ground allowed Jake to notice new things in the Arboretum and move his body in new ways. Together, perceiving and moving supported Jake’s meaning-making to embody the Arboretum as Ariel by sensing it more fully. Furthermore, because Ariel was performed by an ensemble, Jake not only needed to experiment with moving his own body but he also needed to move with and account for seven other performers’ bodies. Jake’s previous experience of running in a group, which included keeping pace and breathing together, had constituted a kind of togetherness or collaborative act. But Jake had never explored movement as a collaborative form of communication or expression until performing with SITA.
Jake’s example demonstrates how meaning-making with the Arboretum was multi-sensory, involving the squishiness of the mud, the smell of the trees, and the texture of the split tree. Jake described a newfound embodied intimacy of moving together with others to create the world of the island. Therefore, his experience represents how participants were simultaneously creating and inhabiting the play’s imaginary spaces of Prospero’s island through movement and other embodied actions. His case also provides an example of how the Arboretum, together with SITA’s placemaking activities, extended Jake’s knowledge of what his body was capable of doing. Moving through the space in different ways, in turn, extended his sensory capacity to observe and understand the Arboretum.

**Community Engagement Across the Four Case Studies**

The four cases illustrate participants’ engagement with the Arboretum as a “thick place” where concentrated meanings and affect accentuated SITA participants’ everyday experience of the Arboretum by threading areas together in a constitutive and resonant expression of community belonging (Duff, 2010; Casey, 2001). Malcolm’s case represents how the small, experimental student group grew into a community institution. Founding and long-time members like Malcolm viewed their relationship to the community and the Arboretum as one of stewardship. Mona’s case illustrates how membership and belonging to the SITA community provided critical social structures that affirmed and expanded her identity as a performer and team member who provided creative value to the group. Rich and Elliot’s case showed how the Arboretum and the SITA community supported their familial relationship by dedicating time to being together outdoors. Furthermore, SITA activities provided a shared project (practicing lines, reading the play together) that extended beyond the Arboretum. Finally, Jake’s case illustrates how the Arboretum especially challenges first-time performers and pushes them to move, collaborate, and sense the world around them in new ways, in turn supporting collective and individual placemaking practices.

**Themes of place and community engagement mediated by SITA’s placemaking.** Across the interviews and maps, participants described their relationship with the Arboretum and explained how partaking in SITA’s collaborative placemaking activities influenced this relationship. Four themes
emerged that inform participants’ engagement with the Arboretum as an agentful topography. 1) The Arboretum was an open place of ownership and belonging. 2) SITA activities mediated and supported emergent and intimate ways of sensing and knowing with the Arboretum. 3) The Arboretum was a place of adventure, experimentation, supported engagement. 4) The Arboretum was a ‘separate space’ coupled with SITA’s activities, facilitated participants’ engagement in alternative forms of moving, sensing, and being.

The Arboretum as an open place for ownership and belonging. Participants engaged with the Arboretum in highly affective and emergent ways. Participants demonstrated creative ownership by adopting their own names for specific areas of the Arboretum (i.e., Frisbee Meadow) even before they were SITA members. Current participants referred to areas by names that had emerged from past productions, such as the Oberon tree from Midsummer Night’s Dream, names not found on any official map. Participants also talked about the Arboretum as a unified entity, often addressing it directly: “Thanks, Arb!” Participants viewed the Arboretum as an open public space, a view that supported their personal feelings of ownership and belonging. This sense of ownership and belonging was greatly enhanced by membership in the SITA community because of their creative placemaking practices.

Participants described their first impression of the Arboretum as a large space with unknown borders and diverse landscapes. The possibility of getting lost, on the other hand, created opportunities for discovery, and the “vastness” of the space allowed people to discover, claim or carve out their own favorite spots. The Arboretum was naturally something to be shared, because of its designation as an open and public space. It was already a shared space to escape to, enjoy a book, bring family and friends, or take a romantic walk. Consequently, these mixed uses of the Arboretum were enfolded into SITA’s placemaking. SITA as a place-based community reflected the same principles of the Arboretum; a shared and collaborative enterprise, conducted in public and open to various kinds of community members (students, faculty, children, etc.).
Cultivating relationships. Related to a sense of ownership was an articulated responsibility to share participants’ sense of wonder and excitement with others and was particularly the case for senior members such as Stanley and Malcolm. This sense of responsibility is evidenced by Malcolm’s description of his relationship with the Arboretum as one of stewardship. However, within the SITA community, Malcolm’s role was more of a cultivator. Malcolm and other senior members of SITA enact cultivation through building relationships with novice members and developing members’ interests and skills. Malcolm helped cultivate the community by mentoring novice members like Mona, supporting and participating in place exploration and acting experimentation, as evidenced by the H2Oberon episode described by Mona and Malcolm.

The Arboretum was also a cultivating space—the agent doing the cultivating. As exemplified in Rich and Elliot’s example, SITA helped the father and son cultivate their relationship by providing a site to be together and share experiences. These experiences include performance activities, working on lines or blocking, and also leisure activities, chatting about what happened at school or observing the Arboretum’s wildlife together. Similarly, Scott and Teddy described a different kind of cultivation through the “forced exposure” with the Arboretum. They described the process of developing a tolerance, then acceptance, and finally an embrace of the challenges of the natural environment that the Arboretum foisted upon them. “Forced exposure” can be conceptualized instead as the Arboretum’s pedagogical cultivating force as Scott and Teddy now aligned themselves as having a nature affinity. This shift was evidenced by becoming accustomed to visiting the Arboretum, which changed their behavior as visiting the space became integrated into their routines.

SITA activities mediate and support emergent and intimate ways of sensing and knowing the Arboretum. The Arboretum, as a site of intense dwelling, prompted by SITA activities, supported performers to sense the environment around them in new ways. These new ways of feeling and knowing can generally be described in terms of noticing and perceiving, moving, and sense-making. Participants discussed how their extended dwelling in the Arboretum facilitated their ability to notice and perceive the
natural world around them, such as the patterns of light throughout the day and the seasonal patterns as the spring gave way to summer. For example, Rich and Elliot were able to anticipate where they might see the deer by using and observing the deer trails or noted where the hawk kept her nest. Another example of enhanced perception was Jake’s ability to “read the space” to anticipate how muddy his performance area would likely be. Similarly, SITA’s placemaking activities supported wayfaring, the act of mindfully moving, perceiving, and being present. While some participants like Mona started the creative process with the Shakespeare text, other participants, of whom Jake is a strong example, based their creative process by finding new ways to move through and with the Arboretum.

Similarly, experiences that were precipitated by SITA’s activities, such as hiding in the long grass (Scott), being required to perform in the rain (Teddy), and continually interacting with the same bush surrounded by mud (Jake), were perceived as “forced exposure” so that participants could perceive, appreciate, or endure nature in a way that they would not have done previously. Consequently, the continued dwelling in the Arboretum challenged participants like Teddy and Scott to sense and respond to the environment differently.

**The Arboretum as a place of adventure and experimentation supports engagement.** Participants like Malcolm and Charlie described how they felt that the Arboretum was a place a person could easily get lost in, or as Malcolm describes it, “an unknown entity.” The Arboretum was quite large and, according to Malcolm, during the early productions, it was rather untamed and overgrown. The perceived qualities of vastness, wilderness, and the unknown of the Arboretum offered opportunities for its visitors to get lost enough to have adventures but also contained and familiar enough so as not to be frightening or disconcerting. Consequently, participants described being more apt to experiment and explore, and more likely to be implicated in activities that were deemed adventurous. Now there were real dangers: deer ticks, wasps, heat stroke, poison ivy, muddy hills or out of trees, but part of the excitement and adventure was accompanied by the sense of the unknown. The process of discovery was enhanced by the need to at least attempt something risky like experimenting, going off the trail, or climbing a tree.
These little adventures that were conquered (mostly) and their risks provided a heightened sense of affect and excitement. Jake, who proudly described how he had not anticipated “being a mud person,” exemplifies the sense of adventure and challenge that led to belonging and affirmation. By the end of the performance run, Jake described his ability to embrace the mud (and other environment-based challenges) as a sense of accomplishment.

The Arboretum as a separate space supports new ways of being through SITA’s unique practices. Related to the Arboretum’s designation as an open and public place was its perceived separateness in purpose and landscape from the surrounding town and university. The liminal or othering quality of the Arboretum supports the fourth theme of this chapter’s findings, that the Arboretum was a “separate space,” mediated by SITA’s unique placemaking practices that supported alternative ways of moving, feeling, and being. The Arboretum was perceived as being more open physically, socially, and conceptually, and therefore it was easier to engage in behaviors that in other places would not be allowed or that would be considered deviant, such as climbing trees (Corryn) or running down a hill as fast as possible while screaming (Charlie). The Arboretum and SITA’s placemaking practices also facilitated forms of identity play and experimentation, such as being gender and even human-fluid (Mona and Jake).

The Arboretum and SITA’s community organization support different forms of peer structures outside of traditional university norms. Rich’s example represents how the traditional hierarchies of university faculty and students could be dissolved or take on different forms within the Arboretum and within the place-based community that it supports. As a member of SITA, Rich was a peer alongside university students. Rather than being seen as a professor or institutional authority figure, Rich’s identity was mostly connected with his character, Alonso, and with being Elliot’s dad. In a typical classroom setting, Rich would have occupied a position of higher authority and expertise.
Summary

From the interviews and annotated map data, I found two interconnected aspects of engagement with the Arboretum as an agentful topography: engagement with the physical Arboretum as a “separate space” from university and city and engagement that was mediated by the creative and cultural practices of SITA as a place-based community. To inform the first aspect, the analyses show that participants’ engagement and meaning-making with the Arboretum was personal, emergent, and highly affective. Over time the members imbricated complicated associations and mental maps that span memories, feelings, and activities. The Arboretum was often conceptualized as a “separate” space in purpose and landscape from the campus and city. Therefore, it was a mixed-use place that supported multiple forms of activities and meaning-making. Dwelling in the Arboretum through SITA changed participants’ relationship with the space.

I identified four major themes by using cases to analyze participants’ experiences more deeply. Participants described the Arboretum in terms of open ownership and belonging, meaning that they felt like it was “their place” but also describing a need and desire to “share it” with others. Next, SITA’s activities mediated and supported emergent and intimate ways of knowing about and feeling (sensing) the Arboretum. SITA as a place-based community engaged in particular practices that supported dwelling (prolonged and habitual inhabitation) and intimacy with the Arboretum in ways that most casual visitors do not engage in. At the same time, the Arboretum was perceived as a liminal physical and social space, thereby affording participants various ways to explore and experiment. Lastly, the Arboretum and SITA’s place-based practices allowed participants to hone their somatically charged observations and perceptions.

I took on the role of emic emplaced ethnographer to understand how participants engaged with the Arboretum. I defined emplacement with the Arboretum as having: 1) A prolonged relationship with the physical space. 2) Being sensitive to how SITA participants become situated in cultural and material practices. 3) Understanding how participants moved through the Arboretum and how their movement
changed or informed their perception. 4) What memories or associations participants brought with them or took away from the Arboretum.

Together with interviews, annotated maps, mapping walking-interviews, and participant photographs, I layered different data to create a more evocative representation of the sights, sounds, and feelings of the Arboretum through the experiences of my participants. Mapping was a central technique that informed my emic ethnographic approach, and I used a variety of mapping techniques to collect and analyze emplaced data. Consequently, the combination of methods operationalized spatial and mapping agencies of drift and layering (Corner, 1999) and bridged interpretivist ethnographic practices and poststructural spatial concepts. Despite the fewer amount of walking-interviews conducted in relation to the others, walking-interviews were intimate exercises in drift both topically and spatially. Together my participants and I practiced shared forms of Debord-esque psychogeography—moving through the space as we traded stories and observations. Walking-interviews provided a nuanced understanding of what kinds of interests, experiences, and memories people brought with them to the Arboretum. Through the walking-interview collage (Figure 4-2), I attempted to provide an impressionistic snap-shot of the Arboretum through the eyes and experiences of SITA members. In this way, I offer an ethnographic account of the Arboretum itself, outside the context of SITA performances.

In the next chapter, I examine how these different engagements are focused on creative and imaginative ways to support the theatrical and narrative placemaking at the core of SITA’s praxis.
Chapter 5

Imagining with the Arboretum: Placemaking as Creative Acts of Representation

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the Arboretum as an agentful topography through the lens of imaginative engagement and the creative representational praxis of SITA’s placemaking. The chapter specifically examines SITA’s narrative placemaking, the creation of a world from a particular Shakespeare narrative, in this case, Prospero’s island from *The Tempest*. Imagining with place is a form of thinking that engenders images of place’s potentialities—those that lie dormant—waiting to be discovered or enacted (Eisner 2002; Fettes & Judson, 2010). Focusing on imaginative engagement with place allows me to understand the various entry points that may recruit, invite, or evoke SITA members into a creative conversation with the Arboretum that in turn influences their meaning-making.

To answer the question of how the SITA community’s imaginative engagement with the Arboretum influences their placemaking, I look specifically at how members made these engagements visible through the representational praxis of theatrical conventions. To achieve these analyses, I performed two kinds of analysis simultaneously. I observed the creation of artifacts by SITA members and their subsequent use to support *Tempest* placemaking through items such as costumes and staging. At the same time, I observed the participation of performers and the Arboretum in creative and imaginative flows as they enacted Prospero's island during rehearsals. I use Eisner’s creative cognitive processes of inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering as analytical touchpoints to observe and describe the fluid elements of SITA’s placemaking. For the analyses in the chapter, I rely on several sources of data including:

a) observations

b) videos
c) field notes of rehearsals from 2017 *Tempest*

d) interviews with music and costume specialists

e) theatrical artifacts

f) interpretive maps drawn by participants

**Emplaced as Performing Pedagogue**

I needed to work in a different kind of emplaced mode and enact a different kind of researcher role to collect data and analyze something as fluid, intimate, and ephemeral as imagination. My goal was to observe and understand how SITA members imaginatively engage with Shakespeare’s text and the physical Arboretum synergistically. Consequently, I needed to practice emplacement with *The Tempest* text before the study began. I read, re-read, and enacted my own understanding of the text to a similar extent as the performers and directors. I used the term *performing pedagogue* to describe my emplaced researcher role and approach to collecting and analyzing performance and imaginative data.

First, performing denotes an understanding of the theatrical medium, and in particular, Shakespeare’s language and *The Tempest* play as a literary and artistic artifact. At the same time, performing also denotes how more-than-human learning systems interact with each other or what Deleuze and Guattari describe as performance. Performance (or enactment) is a non-representational way of describing what something *does*, rather than what it *is*. Approaching learning, imaginative engagement, or even place from a performative stance means approaching the participants (both human and non-human) as being involved in a process rather than a single act. In contrast to the notion of action, which implies human agency and rationality, performance in a Deleuzian context describes an effect on the socio-material assemblage (Sørenson, 2009). Taking a performative research role means that the focus of my observation was *how* the Arboretum participated with SITA members across modes and forms as Prospero’s island was *enacted* (performed as a fluid creative learning activity with the Arboretum) as well as performed (formal theatrical production). Furthermore, a performative stance shifts pedagogical
questions from *what* did SITA members learn about place (Arboretum) or about literature (Shakespeare) to *how* place, text, and imagination participate together as a component of a more-than-human system of learning. A performative stance attempts to decenter human action and therefore attempts to impart a firmer more-than-human-account of learning.

The findings from this inquiry are as follows: 1. SITA’s praxis included creative uses of the resources of its performing bodies, the materiality of the physical Arboretum, and theatrical conventions. Together these representational elements helped render SITA’s placemaking visible (experiential) to its audiences. 2. For the SITA community, placemaking was a series of fluid imaginative engagements that brought forth intentions.

**Imaginative Engagement, Creative Processes, and Placemaking**

I frame this chapter by arguing that placemaking is by nature a creative endeavor and that people’s imaginative engagement is a central aspect of this process. Like other forms of creative making, placemaking engages certain cognitive processes (Eisner, 2002). Eisner argues that representational arts-based practices have at their core four fluid cognitive processes—inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering—that are iterative and rhizomatic in nature. In the context of this study, placemaking is considered an open emergent process facilitated by inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering. In the following section, I provide the definitions from Eisner and offer a descriptive example from SITA.

Inscription is where an idea or image is “put into a durable form. A line is spoken, or a drawing is made—so that the idea can be worked up” (Eisner, 2002, p. 6). The two most durable forms of *Tempest* placemaking were the text and the scene (site selection). Editing is the process of working inscriptions, so they “achieve the quality, precision, and power their creator desires. Editing is paying attention to relationships and attending to details, the process of making work, work” (p. 6). For example, rehearsals by their very nature are exercises of editing. Especially with SITA’s double cast system, the scenes must be practiced with as many combinations of performers as possible to make the ensembles fit together
smoothly. Communication is the “transformation of consciousness into a public form, which is what performance is designed to do” (p. 6). Communication is important between actors who must engage with each other and anticipate their fellow’s action. Directors must communicate with performers. SITA must effectively communicate the contours of the inhabited dramatic world for the outdoor setting to be effective and immersive. Furthermore, in theater, communication between audience and performers is vital. Performers need to “get a read” on the audience and adjust their performance accordingly.

Discovery is the act of being surprised. Being surprised is often a pleasurable or felicitous experience. However, "familiarity and routine may provide security, but not much in the way of delight” (p. 6). Eisner offers that it is through discovery that we are the most likely to learn something. What is learned can then become a part of the individual’s (or in SITA’s case, communal) repertoire. Once the new knowledge is enfolded into practice new and more complex challenges can be successfully addressed. It is also possible to create something exciting but not be able to or know how to repeat it again. Thus, discovery can be ephemeral or even perplexing.

I use the four fluid processes to describe how I observed the creative flows of SITA members participating with the Arboretum as they created and then performed the imaginary world of Prospero’s island. The creative cognitive processes enable me to observe and make sense of what Eisner describes as “embarkation points” in the performers' placemaking activities across different mediums. These points help set the course of the performers’ creative activity and mark when performers are guided by place or must surrender to place’s (Arboretum’s) demands as well as the emerging forms. Therefore, I analyze both the individual and collaborative ways that SITA members imaginatively engage with the Arboretum as a form of meaning-making that supports their placemaking.

Wenger (2010) describes imagination as an integral mode of belonging within social learning systems. "Imagination includes constructing images of ourselves, communities and of the world in order to orient ourselves, to feel out our situation and to explore situations (e.g., drawing maps, telling a story, or building a set of possible scenarios to understand one’s options)” (p 228). Wenger distinguishes
between two types of imagination, that which is fantastical, and that which is facilitative. A communal-social imagination requires abstract thinking that expands upon the “facilities or capabilities of what is possible in the material world” (p. 229). Therefore, I examine examples of SITA’s imaginative engagement that focuses on both the fantastical aspects of imagination and the facilitative—how to work out new and creative ideas in the material world (Wenger, 2010; Eisner, 2002). My findings show that imagining with place is one kind of pedagogical address that serves an invitation or invocation for place to be a collaborator in a more-than-human system of activity (Ellsworth, 2005).

**Theatrical conventions as representations utilized in placemaking.** I examined SITA’s use of theatrical conventions to understand how imaginative engagement supports SITA’s placemaking as the performers create Prospero’s island for 2017 *Tempest*. Theatrical conventions are broadly conceived as the tools and practices that act as guidelines for the production. Examples of basic theatrical conventions are the use of a script, a single text that all the performers use to guide their performance, and the use of a stage, a dedicated space for the performers to move and speak.

Theatrical conventions are also tools that playwrights, performers, directors, and designers use to communicate the theme or mood of the play; they include material artifacts like costumes and props. Therefore, conventions are aspects of the production that set up the degree of abstraction that the audience can expect. Furthermore, the logic and style of how a play is presented are dictated by the conventions the production uses. For example, a classic Shakespeare convention is the use of a character’s soliloquy, a monologue where the character explains to the audience what or how they are feeling. Hamlet’s famous, “To be or not to be” speech is an example of a soliloquy. Although not particularly realistic to everyday language, soliloquies are a standard convention in drama and help the audience understand the internal feelings of a character. In this study, I use the term *theatrical convention* broadly and view such activities as memorizing lines, devising staging, and making costumes as the representational theatrical conventions of SITA’s creative placemaking.
Representation of an idea is always mediated by something (Eisner, 2002). In SITA’s case, the two most important mediating influences of placemaking were the primacy of the Shakespearean text and the physical space of the Arboretum itself. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the Shakespeare text guided but did not wholly determine SITA’s placemaking in the Arboretum. Put another way, the Shakespeare text was only a map—not the terrain—and provided an important but by no means singular entry point for SITA members to imagine with the Arboretum. Therefore, I explore the interplay between the emplaced materiality of the Arboretum and its effect on SITA members’ imaginative engagement.

Through my analysis, I find two ways that SITA members’ imaginative engagement became activated, and creative ideas were manifested through representational artifacts and performed actions. The first way that SITA members activated their imaginative engagement was through using the Shakespeare text as a map to inform their placemaking. Performers accomplished this act by using their dramatic character as an empathizing lens to create a new or different relationship with Arboretum as Prospero’s island. The performers also used the text as a guide to find symmetry between what was described in the text and the physical space of the Arboretum. The second way that members were imaginatively engaged was through the materiality of the Arboretum, which acted as agent, medium, and tool to refine and enhance their narrative placemaking. To enact this latter strategy, they found the Arboretum to be a source of inspiration for their representational artifacts and theatrical conventions such as costumes and props. Participants interpreted the Arboretum as both generative matrix (providing creative inspiration and raw materials) as well as a challenging environmental constraint that prompted SITA members to seek out or improvise emergent solutions for logistical problems.

Using the Shakespeare Text as a Map

The SITA members used the Shakespeare text like a map to explore and discover the Arboretum. The text acted like a map that both provided details but also left openings for the members to fill by using the materiality of the Arboretum and their collective imagination. From this synergy, SITA members were able to construct imaginary places (described in the text) by finding elements embedded in physical
spaces. As part of the text-as-map practice, the Shakespeare text prompted three techniques: building character empathy, establishing textual symmetry, and providing representational cues that SITA members used to orient their praxis and enhance their placemaking.

**Character empathy: Seeing the Arboretum through different eyes.** Performers used the text to build empathetic relationships with their dramatic characters (Barab, Dodge, Ingram-Goble, Pettyjohn, Peppler, Volk, & Solomou, 2010). Performers engaged in character empathy exercises that helped them develop an understanding of their character’s attitude and motivation. The exercises happened early in the rehearsal process and were often guided by Karen, the director. For example, performers were tasked with imagining the relationships their characters had to the space of Prospero’s island. The characters and their lines provided a foundation upon which to build nuanced understandings motivated by the synergy of the theatrical narrative (the Shakespeare play being performed) and the materiality of the Arboretum. Imagining one’s self as another person, and embracing the strengths, fears, and motivations of this other person, allowed participants to explore the Arboretum in novel ways. This roleplaying manifested in the ways that performers moved through the space, causing displays of relative comfort or discomfort, and forcing reactions to the environment around them.

My understanding of the ways performers used their role to experience place was drawn from rehearsal videos and notes, individual interviews, and interpretive maps based on each performer’s dramatic character’s conceptualization of Prospero’s island. The most direct evidence of the performer’s linkage to interpretations of place were the interpretive maps. As described earlier, Karen and I collaborated on the interpretive mapping activity so that it could serve both our needs. As a researcher, I collected participant artifacts that provided insight into how performers inscribed, edited, and communicated the synergy of physical Arboretum and Shakespeare text. Karen saw the activity as a way for performers to think about their characters motivations and attitudes towards the island and to explore performers’ understanding of the text.
A total of nineteen maps were created by participants as part of this study. Table 5-1 organizes the participants’ commonly drawn elements into categories. For example, some performers took a traditional cartographic approach by labeling topography and included legends or cardinal directions. Meanwhile, other performers displayed their interpretations through writing the dramatic lines spoken in specific areas of Prospero’s island. These depicted elements typically showed the synergy between text and place and represented the variety of physical and imaginative ways the performers conceptualized and communicated the place of Prospero’s island.

Table 5-1: Visual elements from interpretive maps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Visual Elements</strong></th>
<th><strong>Example</strong></th>
<th><strong>Instances across all maps</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cartographic elements</strong></td>
<td>legends, compass, scale.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arboretum’s physical features</strong></td>
<td>Split tree, boardwalk (Ariel tree 9)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Features described in the text</strong></td>
<td>Prospero’s cell</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lines from the text</strong></td>
<td>“Where the bees suck there suck I.”</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animals</strong></td>
<td>Sea monster</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People</strong></td>
<td>Ferdinand</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-representational</strong></td>
<td>arbitrary colors and lines</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text/ labels</strong></td>
<td>“forest” “shipwreck”</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visual elements and examples from interpretive maps were drawn by performers based on their experiences in the rehearsals and performance of The Tempest. The maps also showed how the performers empathized with their dramatic character by adopting their character’s attitudes, motivations, and sensitivities to the place in order to see the landscape through new eyes.

**Character’s relationship with Prospero’s island as shown through interpretive maps.** I analyzed all nineteen maps to understand the visual elements shown in Table 5-1 and to understand the interplay between participants’ imaginative engagement with place and the point of view of their dramatic
characters. After this analysis, three maps were strategically sampled based on their depiction of the range of visual and imaginative modes used to communicate their character's relationship with the island. By presenting these three maps, I highlight the diversity of Shakespearean text as a placemaking tool to interpret and explore and the Arboretum.

One example of how a particular participant-character depicted place through her map comes from Meredith-Miranda (Figure 5-1). The map depicts physical details of the island and social details of Miranda’s life. Meredith-Miranda’s map shows an interpretation of place that represented a strong engagement with her character and the character’s romantic relationship. Her map’s features include the prominence of the characters faces, the intimate details of her character’s life on the island, such as where Miranda likes to go fishing, swimming, and the exact spot where she sees Ferdinand (another character). Other cartographic details include a walking trail and a compass rose.

Figure 5-1: Meredith-Miranda's map. Meredith-Miranda’s map shows strong engagement with the character’s relationships as shown by the prominence of the faces. Her map attends to Miranda’s everyday knowledge of the island.
One interesting feature about Meredith-Miranda’s personal background is that she lived in a home bordering the Arboretum. From her backyard, she walked a not-so-often trod path through the Arboretum on her way to rehearsals. During her interview, she said that in preparation for her role, she spent a whole afternoon wandering through the Arboretum, trying to imagine how Miranda would spend her time and where.

_Meredith_: I figured she [Miranda] would spend a lot of time swimming, fishing, and reading her father’s books, maybe collecting birds’ nests or something, I don’t know, stuff like that. Then I try to **imagine where she would do that**— as I walked around.

This statement helps capture how Meredith-Miranda attended to characters’ relationships with each other and the island. Her map is an introspective, nuanced depiction of human meanings woven with place, including its heroes, villains, and everyday life.

The intersection between the text of the play, the space, and meaning-making emerged through Meredith-Miranda’s map. Visually, her map is literal in her description and conventional in its cartographic qualities. These features include a traditional birds-eye view and labels and depictions of topical features like trees, beaches, and mountains. At the same time, the map’s approach to both character and place is corroborated by Meredith-Miranda’s approach to acting and her domestic relationship to the Arboretum.

Some participants drew interpretive maps that were not as literal in their approach to representations of place. Two of these participants included Charlie and Jake. Charlie was a self-described “nature person” who enjoyed “getting lost in the Arb.” Charlie played the part of Trinculo, the court jester, one of three comic relief characters. I asked Charlie to describe his character’s relationship to the space and explain how he tried to communicate that relationship to the audience through his performance.
Charlie: Trinculo is a jester by profession. And he is the type of guy to whom everything is an enigma. So he’s kind of like the worst person and the best person to be discovering the island for the first time...on one hand, he’s completely bewildered, he has no sense of how to fend for himself...but at the same time, he’s just got this natural sort of inquisitiveness. And the way I’m playing him he's very close to the land, he’s sort of always scrabbling for stuff.”

This statement illustrates how Trinculo had a very different relationship with nature and the space than Charlie. Rather than drawing from Charlie's own experience of adventure and ease with being in unfamiliar surroundings, Charlie's Trinculo had quite the opposite response. Physically, Charlie’s embodiment of Trinculo as “being close to the land” meant that he was always tripping, falling, getting tangled up in bushes or trees in such a way that the more he struggled, the more intractable in the landscape he became. Charlie used the word “scrabbling” to describe his affective movement and gestures, which was evocative of the frenetic, scratching, and low to the ground quality of Charlie-Trinculo’s movement through Prospero’s island. This embodied movement was also suggestive, if not complementary to Charlie-Trinculo's map.

Charlie drew his map of Prospero’s island (Figure 5-2) as a series of strata or layers that included the bog, woods, and beach. A unique feature of his map are the words “bad” or “scary” listed alongside most of the topographic features. The language signified, according to Charlie, that “basically everything on the island is terrifying to him [Trinculo].” The map listed what happened in these places, but provided no other details, perhaps because Trinculo was either too scared or too drunk to notice any nuance of place. This empathetic engagement with the character’s relationship with the island and the physical environment lent itself well to Charlie’s portrayal of the comedic character.
Trinculo’s staging and blocking included falling down hillsides, swatting at flies, and cowering at the sound of raucous crows. For Trinculo, everything on the island was new and potentially dangerous. Trinculo was always either hungry or thirsty, and Charlie attended to this detail of his character by depicting a.) the bog where the fools lose the rum bottle, b.) the valley where one “can’t eat grass,” and c.) the beach where there was also “no drink.” Charlie’s map is quite sophisticated in its empathetic approach. His character represents the greedy colonist, taking and consuming as he pleases and desires. The island was there to feed his and fellow fool Stephano’s appetites. Where Stephano, the pompous butler, sought wealth and power by claiming the islands’ resources, court jester Trinculo’s preoccupation was mostly with his stomach. For Trinculo, the world is a dichotomous place; it is either bad or very bad. Charlie's map is humorous because Trinculo provides much of the play's comic relief. Therefore, the
maps can be read as meta-performances of Prospero’s island. Where Meredith’s was thoughtful, sweet, and romantic, Charlie’s scrawled “can’t eat grass” personifies the funny, frenetic mess that is Trinculo.

The relationship of human characters like Meredith-Miranda and Charlie-Trinculo to Prospero’s island were contrasted with the performers playing the role of the Ariels, who served as personifications of the island itself. For example, Jake-Ariel’s map (Figure 5.3) takes a more sensory and expressionistic approach. His map includes a sun, water, a cave opening, and foliage.

![Figure 5-3: Jake-Ariel's map. This expressionistic style depicts the non-human energy of Ariel as it moves across Prospero’s island.](image)

The strokes are fast and quick with other randomly assigned colors. When asked to explain, Jake-Ariel related that maps were “what humans use,” and he wanted to capture a non-human perspective: “The colors are the different paths and energies that an Ariel might go or be.” Jake-Ariel’s conception of his relationship with place is expressed as embodied (somatic) imaginative engagement. Jake-Ariel described himself as an energetic mover as well as a cross-country runner. During rehearsals, he was constantly running around the rehearsal space and trying out new ways to move his body. Thus, his energetic movements and air-spirit paths translated to a mostly non-representational, non-textual approach in his
map. This expressionistic approach corroborated by his one-on-one interview and his description of Ariel as the force that sets the mood for the island.

The maps exemplify the complex imaginative engagement sparked by the text, which must be interpreted by individual performers. Each map illustrates an individual’s creative, interpretive representation of Prospero’s island through the place-empathizing lens of their dramatic character and the physical Arboretum. The maps are important data sources to understand how SITA’s collective imaginative practices were a part of their placemaking; how together performers used the text, developed character empathy, and as their character inhabited the Arboretum. At the same time, imaginative engagement was quite personal and idiosyncratic, as evidenced by the diversity of representational approaches to mapping. Meredith-Miranda's map of the island demonstrates a strong, romantic, imaginative engagement and traditional cartographic elements. Charlie’s map is more like a list of places, a route map of unfortunate stops on the island. By contrast, Jake-Ariel’s map of the island demonstrates a more conceptual and affective illustration of Prospero’s island by taking a non-representational approach.

**Textual symmetry: Landscape as medium and tool.** The second means by which participants engaged in imaginative engagement was to collaboratively discover and shape the play’s scenes by establishing textual symmetry. I define textual symmetry as the creation or discovery of a feature described in the text that is also present within the Arboretum. This mirroring can be as simple as a rock or bush, or it can describe a topographic feature such as a river or valley. The directors and performers used Shakespeare’s text to draw out details and find or amend similar spaces in the Arboretum. The following episode describes a detailed example from The Tempest’s production.

**Finding the Ariel tree.** The directors’ original desire was to stage the majority of The Tempest in the prairie area. This goal could not be achieved because the prairie was a muddy construction zone due to maintenance. Grudgingly, the directors and performers had to re-evaluate possible areas that would be appropriate for the play’s staging. One alternative was the East Valley, a space that formed a natural bowl and was often used in past productions. This area provided pleasant views and enough space to hold an
audience of 200 people. However, there was a collective concern from the performers and directors that the space was “over-used” from other productions.

A few weeks before the start of rehearsal, an early spring storm, a real-life tempest, brought down a giant tree, splitting it down the middle (Figure 5-4). The tree's limbs extended over seventy feet into the valley in opposite directions like the pinchers of a crab. This new feature helped ease the disappointment about the loss of the prairie-river area among the group. Several of the performers, especially those cast as Ariel, began to jump on what they quickly named the “Ariel tree.” The Ariel performers collectively identified the tree as their “home base” within the world of the play. As one performer exclaimed, “it is the perfect place—like the Arb wanted to give us something, Thanks Arb!” This performer’s statement illustrates how the SITA members conceptualized the Arboretum as a partner, providing the raw materials for their *Tempest* placemaking (Dudek field notes. 4.29).

![Figure 5-4: Ariel performers “discovering” the split tree in the East Valley. Director Karen urges Ariel-performers explore the tree.](image)

The leading cause for the group’s excitement about the split tree was that it resembled a feature described in the Shakespeare text. In *The Tempest*’s text, Ariel was held captive inside a “cloven pine” by an evil witch. Prospero, the protagonist, frees Ariel from its confinement but also threatens to trap Ariel with an even sturdier jail by “rendering an oak” if Ariel does not comply with his orders. The following lines illustrate Ariel’s relationship with the tree.
PROSPERO
And in her most unmitigable rage,
Into a cloven pine; within which rift
Imprison’d thou didst painfully remain
A dozen years; within which space she died
And left thee there; ....
When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape
The pine and let thee out.

ARIEL
I thank thee, master.

PROSPERO
If thou more murmur’st, I will rend an oak
And peg thee in his knotty entrails till
Thou hast howl’d away twelve winters.

Shakespeare, ed, 1999 1.2.( 276-296)

Thus, the split tree, that was “made gape” in the text provides credence to the magical power of the character Prospero and to Ariel’s rootedness or deeply emplaced relationship with the island (read Arboretum). Figure 5-5 depicts the scene described in the lines above. Prospero, played here by Stanley, explains the story of Ariel’s imprisonment. The seven performers to the right played the single character of the fairy-like Ariel. As Stanley-Prospéro delivered the lines describing the tree, the Ariel ensemble reenacts the stiff and tortuous confinement of the tree with their bodies.
This scene exemplifies how the Ariel ensemble performed place by synergizing the physical features of Prospero’s island with the Arboretum’s physical features and resources. Through the example of the split tree, the Arboretum embodied the text, which was then rendered into the physical world of the dramatic play. It is important to note that during the performance the split tree was never explicitly called the “cloven pine” or identified as Ariel’s place of confinement. Rather the tree’s identity as the site of Ariel’s release was left implied to the audience. When entering the East Valley for the subsequent scene, audience members reacted to the sight of the tree, connecting the description from Prospero’s speech with comments like “there’s the tree” and “that’s where they [Ariels] were all holed-up” (Dudek field notes 6.16, 6.17). The tree’s implicit state allowed the audience to “discover” the tree when they moved to the next scene in the East Valley.

The split tree was the site of embodied, imaginative engagement and creativity—it also physically challenging the performers. This perspective was captured in Jake and Mona’s interviews when they described having to “flow” (when the Ariel performers collectively move across the landscape). “Flowing” around the tree also included running down the hill to the tree while dodging sticks and debris.
Jake related that he had to learn to run a certain way through this area so as not to get hurt. The tree continued to engender new spaces and scenes. The cracked and exposed roots doubled as the villain’s dwelling and the ominous site of Ariel becoming a harpy monster—one of the play’s darker scenes.

The split tree was an example of the Arboretum offering new landscape-as-medium that SITA inscribed into the landscape of Prospero’s island. The Arboretum also provided tools or theatrical conventions that the performers could use. Tools manifested early in the rehearsal process when several performers discovered large branches, presumably from the split tree. The following episode was taken from field notes and pictures from the first rehearsal.

Karen and three Ariel performers where moving sticks out of the way to make a clearing so that another ensemble would have a place to enter and exit the scene. Karen pulled out a big branch. An Ariel performer helped her picked up another and brandished it about. Karen pulled out another branch and matched the performers’ movement as if flying. “Wings!” someone called out. “Harrppppy wings,” another performer yelled. Karen responded with “Ohh harpy wings, yesssss.” The branches thus became props for a scene where Ariel assumes the shape of a harpy, a huge flying monster. The scale and scope of what the performers could enact increased with the addition of wing-branches.

Throughout the play SITA performers edited the space of the split tree, recasting it through affective, discursive, and gestural means. Similar to the scene of the cloven pine where the Ariel performers enacted Ariel’s confinement (Figure 5-5), performers used their bodies to create a new, more-than-human form of a harpy (see Figure 5-6). The split tree was again used as the site of violence and magic, described in the text by taking advantage of the dramatic visual qualities of the cracked trunk and exposed roots of the physical tree in the Arboretum. The split tree was the site of several different scenes. The performers reframed the area as a dark and menacing space for multiple scenes through the use of theatrical conventions like props, music and percussive sounds, and performers’ gestures.

Using the tree multiple times for different scenes became a theatrical convention that supported the more complex narrativizing engagement of the play. Similarly, the discovery of the branches by the performers, their improvisation with and editing of the materials, from branches to wings, illustrates the
synergy between human and non-human agents. This episode illustrates the agency of the Arboretum in providing the performers with resources and extending the imaginative use of the performers’ bodies and movement.

![Figure 5-6: Conception sketch of the harpy (left) and corresponding performance of the harpy by Ariel ensemble. Performers enact the form of a harpy with the found branches as prop-pieces making up the wings (right).](image)

The production drawings and images in Figure 5-6 are examples of the collaborative, embodied, and emplaced creative process that included texts, bodies, place, and artifacts. The textual idea was first brought forth into a representation and then embodied by human performers in concert with the Arboretum (in this case the split tree) and other found materials furnished by the Arboretum.

**The Materiality of Placemaking: Staging, Costumes, and Music as Representational Artifacts of Placemaking**

This section illuminates how the elements of place—both the physical Arboretum and *The Tempest*’s fictional description of Prospero’s island—were imagined and conceptualized with the support of theatrical conventions. Part of SITA’s praxis was to use the semiotic resources of their physical bodies and materiality of the Arboretum to help guide their performance. Any performer needs to be highly attentive to their environment, but Shakespearean drama makes a useful case to understand how affect and feeling are created and communicated. For example, Shakespeare’s language can be dense,
meandering, and archaic. Add to this language, the constraints of the large space and acoustics of the Arboretum, with the result that communicating nuanced plot points and character motivations were a challenge. A performer could not rely on the text/line delivery alone to convey meaning. An audience might only be able to follow seventy-five percent of what was being said. Therefore, SITA performers had to rely on other semiotic resources of their performing bodies (tone, gesture, expression), materiality of the Arboretum (landscape, paths, trees) as well as theatrical conventions to communicate characters’ feelings and intentions as well as conveying information about the setting or “world” of the play.

I examine how SITA used physical materials from the Arboretum and drew inspiration from the Arboretum’s flora and fauna, sight, and sounds, to incorporate into theatrical conventions such as staging, costumes, and music. Examining the materiality of SITA’s placemaking (the use of representational conventions) elucidates both the fantastical aspect of imaginative engagement with place and also the facilitative aspect—how to make ideas work out in material form. Investigating the material artifacts of SITA’s creative placemaking provided the next finding that SITA used theatrical conventions to edit and communicate spaces in the Arboretum for their placemaking. Furthermore, the Arboretum’s landscape served as agent, medium, and tool within SITA’s placemaking.

**Mapping movement through Prospero’s island: Staging in the Arboretum’s East Valley.**

The Arboretum provided an exciting but challenging landscape to use as a performance space. Consequently, the directors had to innovate theatrical conventions and create logistical tools to keep track of the performers, the space, and all the activities happening there. In a traditional proscenium stage, the convention is for the performers to take entrances and exits on the right and left side of the stage. However, in the Arboretum, performers could enter a scene from anywhere, sometimes even running through the audience. For this reason, the directors and performers needed to create logistical staging that took into account aspects like the audience sightlines, performers’ blocking, availability to paths, and distance traveled. One way to do this was to create maps and sketches of the play’s route and the movement of performers and audience. Figure 5-7 shows the director, Karen’s sketched production map.
It is a map of the entire production route, starting with the prologue in the Heathdale, the opening scene near the Oberon tree and boardwalk, and the full blocking in the East Valley.

Figure 5-7: *Tempest* Blocking Map. Director Karen’s initial route and staging map and production notes of The *Tempest* scenes in the East Valley.

The East Valley, where the split tree was located, contained complicated blocking as the play moved back and forth across three-subplots that came together in the final scene. *The Tempest* utilized mostly the south and north hills of the valley. The split tree spanned the north-east part of the valley. The audience moved three times within the valley, adjusting their position each time to observe the shipwrecked dudes, the clowns, and the lovers. Scenes in *The Tempest* switched back and forth between the somber or terrifying moments with the shipwrecked sailors, comedic scenes with the clowns, and the romantic scenes of Miranda and Ferdinand. On the map, characters are demarcated by the first letter of their name, for example, P-for Prospero. The roman numerals represent the scenes.
Karen created her own map of the play-space of the Arboretum, marking the various acts and scenes from the text and approximating where each ensemble would perform its scene. This logistical representation is a combination of Shakespeare text, Arboretum map, and directorial play-book. Karen used this map to orient herself and the other directors in the space of the Arboretum. Sketching out the possible staging provided another form of spatial representation that was required to collaboratively edit the space and communicate with the co-directors and performers. Karen’s map also featured several question marks such as “magic circle?” and “cave?” Karen explained that she wanted to use a circle of roughhewn benches in the Heathdale, but was not sure how it fitted with the text. She eventually decided not to use the “magic circle” at all. Similarly, Karen was unsure where to stage Caliban’s cave. It was decided that the split tree would also double as Caliban’s cave. (Dudek fieldnotes. 5.12) Place prompted emergent decision-making, and this episode shows how Karen used the map to address unresolved logistical questions, which were subject for experimentation and problem-solving. The route and staging went through several iterations based on logistics, emergent needs, and creative experimentation. Therefore, the final product was different from this initial sketch. The map also represents the kinds of working logistical artifacts that were endemic to SITA’s praxis.

Finding inspiration for placemaking. SITA members included specialists such as the costume mistress and composer/lead musician in addition to the performers and directors. These specialists created unique theatrical conventions and artifacts that helped the performers “get into character.” This was especially true for the non-human characters like Ariels, who also had to “get into place.” What I mean by this is that they had to feel grounded and emplaced in the imaginary world of the play. The Ariels characters were conceptualized as the embodiment of Prospero’s island and therefore had to embody to some degree the Arboretum itself. The next section deals with how SITA members were inspired by the Arboretum’s affective textures of light, color, and sound, which they incorporated into their artifacts. The theatrical conventions explored here, such as music and costumes, helped set the mood and communicate information about how the audience should feel and what they should anticipate in the space.
**Costume mistress.** The specialist with the most detailed approach to incorporating elements of nature into her artifacts was Anya, the costume mistress. Anya has been SITA’s costume mistress for four seasons. During her interview, she described her close relationship with the Arboretum, as she was a lifelong resident of the town who spent many childhood hours in the space. When asked how she decided on Ariel’s costume concept, Anya explained that the characters needed something elemental, something that could equally represent air and water. Table 5-2 provides excerpts from Anya’s sketchbook that include conceptual headings and lists of words and ideas associated with the character and the island. Some of her recorded words, such as ‘ethereal’ and ‘flaming,’ are featured in the Shakespeare text. Anya’s sketchbook was divided into areas such as Words, Ariel, Island, Ariel-Materials, and Theory. The table above provides examples of her text, while Figure 5-8 provides a costume sketch next to the conceptual costume map.

Table 5-2: Extracts of terms and ideas from Anya’s costume sketchbook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sketchbook Heading</th>
<th>Words and Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Words</strong></td>
<td>feathers, ethereal, light, soft, flowing, natural graceful, scary?, otherworldly Non-human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ariel</strong></td>
<td>flaming, natural, wood, animals, powerful, magic, ethereal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Island</strong></td>
<td>clouds, rain, thunder, lightening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theory</strong></td>
<td>Maze, web, dream, spiral, dream catcher, labyrinth consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ariel-Materials</strong></td>
<td>feathers, silk (opaque and shear) cheese cloth leather? netting (little)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5-8 illustrates how the costume mistress also began with the textual description of the character to formulate what the Ariels might look like. She wanted to use bird feathers to emphasize flight and found further inspiration when she observed the clouds of a storm dissipating during sunset. These ideas prompted her to create for each Ariel performer a different feather feature. When the Ariels came
together, the distributed feather pieces created the whole bird or feather suit and emphasized the
collectiveness of the Ariels’ dramatic character.

SITA’s costume shop was located in the Arboretum’s visitor’s center, which also served as
SITA’s makeshift meeting place, dressing rooms, and prop and costume loft during the summer.
Therefore, Anya was “on-site” during the rehearsal process. She would go out with the performers and
watch the scenes in order to understand where the performers would be and what they were doing.

Figure 5-8: Ariel costume sketches (left) and costume conception map (right) from Anya’s notebook.
These artifacts reflect the iterative process of creating the theatrical conventions (costumes, props, etc.)
that help communicate the affective aspects of The Tempest’s island.

Due to both the imaginative aspects of and physical limitations caused by the Arboretum, Anya
needed to balance her creative ideas and the practical needs of the performers. Anya had to rethink her
initial design when she saw how the Ariel performers had to move across the split tree, how the material
would rip to shreds and get caught. She explained in her interview, “the Arb definitely keeps you on your
toes.” Mud, sticks, and brambles were just a few of the obstacles that made costume design and
maintenance a challenge. For example, the Ariels were going to be barefoot, but the split tree area was
full of sticks and debris, thus prompting Anya to make all of the performers’ moccasin-style foot coverings, a technique she had never tried before.

Anya’s creative process and practices shared many of the same characteristics as the SITA performers’ process. First, she used the Shakespeare text as her primary guide to understanding each character, and then she created costumes that helped communicate their station and temperament. She used her emplaced knowledge and presence in the Arboretum to guide her creative inspiration, such as drawing on the colors of the sunset. Like the Ariel performers, Anya was challenged by the materiality of the split tree—its texture and bulk. Yet, at the same time, she was able to create costumes that helped the Ariel performers to “flow” as the wind would move through their costumes, while also communicating a cohesiveness to the ensemble.

**Music director.** Colin was a performer portraying Ariel and doubled as the production’s lead musician and composer. It was also his first time being in a SITA production. Music was central to this production as the Shakespeare texts reference the “music of the island” as a way to underscore the island’s foreignness and potential for magic to occur. Colin put the songs within Shakespeare’s text to music. He used a combination of historical Elizabethan melodies and original compositions. Colin, along with the Ariel performers and musicians, created an ambient soundscape to represent that magic was afoot to also signal transitions between the audience’s movement to new scenes. One of these songs described by Colin as “Ariel’s theme” served to alert the audience of the Ariels’ presence in the space, even if they were not visible.

*Colin:* I wanted something that was watery, and I was thinking about the opening notes from [Disney’s] *Little Mermaid,* (sings and plays invisible piano). That triplet combo? You know like …[hums again] and then I just put it in a minor key, and Ariel (name of Disney mermaid) gave me Ariel—Shakespeare. Like, why not?
Colin, like Anya, drew his inspiration from elemental aspects of Ariel’s character and the Arboretum. Whereas Anya tried to communicate the air and sky quality, Colin chose water and was partly due to the Huron River that runs through the north side of the Arboretum. The basis for Colin’s idea for Ariel’s leitmotif was a combination of a humorous word association and pop culture, the character of Ariel from *The Tempest* and the character from the Disney movie.

Initially, Colin’s music had complex harmonies and a large vocal range. In the space, however, performers found it difficult to maintain fidelity to his work because the space was too large and the Ariels had to sing while running across the valley. These restrictions caused Colin to rethink his initial ideas for the music, making it much simpler and with fewer nuances. As he explained, “I really had to dial it back and focus on what was essential.” When asked to reflect on how the outdoor staging influenced his creative process, Colin acknowledged that there was a learning curve with what was possible in the space.

SITA used music to edit and communicate place based on the text. *The Tempest* text calls for several songs and musical interludes to lead the shipwrecked sailors in and out of scenes. The magic of the island is signaled by music and is described by the character of Caliban: “Be not afeard: the island is full of noises, sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not. Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum in mine ear” (*Tempest*, 3.3 (133-136). The Shakespeare text does not provide a musical score, instead only the performance lines and a note such as “played upon pipe.” Similarly, Shakespearean stage directions are often vague: “Enter Ariel (invisible), playing and singing.” (Pelican Shakespeare, ed. Holland, 1999). Therefore, it was incumbent upon the directors and performers to decide how the music should sound and in what capacity it should be used.

Ariel performers, along with other musicians, made use of the flute, chimes, rattles, drums, and violin. Whereas traditional theater might utilize a lighting cue to signal a scene change, the performers used music to edit the physical space of the Arboretum to shift the scene or mood and communicate this
change to the audience. For example, Table 5-3 illustrates three songs present in the text that Colin set to original music. The table provides the text, musical quality, dramatic context, and site used.

Table 5-3: Songs from *The Tempest* set to original music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Shakespeare text excerpt</th>
<th>Affective and musical quality</th>
<th>Narrative placement and context</th>
<th>Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Come unto these yellow sands</em></td>
<td>Come unto these yellow sands, And take hands and kissed, The wild waves whilst, foot it feitly here and there; And sweet sprites, the burden bear.</td>
<td>soft, romantic and upbeat</td>
<td>Music draws Ferdinand to Miranda</td>
<td>Split tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Full fathoms five</em></td>
<td>Full fathom five, thy father lies; Of his bones are coral made; Those are pearls that were his eyes But doth suffer a sea change into something rich and strange.</td>
<td>Melancholy, menacing, sung in a minor key</td>
<td>Frightens Ferdinand to believe his father the King is drowned</td>
<td>Split tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Where the bee sucks</em></td>
<td>Where the bee sucks, there suck I; In a cowslip’s bell I lie; There I couch when owls do cry; On the bat’s back I do fly After summer merrily.</td>
<td>Joyous, bouncing</td>
<td>Ariel robes Prospero, anticipating freedom</td>
<td>Edge of Main Valley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to melodies and leitmotifs, Colin used percussive instruments to help set the mood for the audience, for example, signaling when there was danger or a scene involving “invisible magic.”

Figure 5-9 illustrates the musicians, who kept fairly hidden during the performances to create the “invisible magic music” and Veronica-Ariel with her percussive rattle armband.
SITA’s application of music connoted the relative magic of the island and Ariel’s presence in the scene. Ariel costumes included wrist and ankle rattles that provided ambient rustling to alert the audience of their presence and which could be shaken in unison for emphasis.

Similar to other theatrical conventions like costumes, the music, particularly Ariel’s songs, helped to inscribe, edit, and communicate the world of Prospero’s island. Music set the mood and communicated to the audience that something magical was about to take place. Therefore, music was a highly effective means of imaginative engagement used to communicate the affect and moods of Prospero’s island as well as assisting the narrative along. Although music is not generally thought of a “representational” medium, here I include it as one of the many theatrical tools that SITA used in its placemaking.

**Placemaking as a set of imaginative engagements that brought forth intentions.** During rehearsals there was a great deal of play and experimentation. Some of these discoveries and actions made it into the show, and some did not. Sometimes an action or the use of a prop would be improvised by one performer then abandoned, only to be taken up by their cast double. Similarly, imaginative engagement flowed from text to bodies, landscape, and costumes. It is fitting to say that that SITA’s imaginative engagement did not just flow but was also sticky, in that it entangled lots of other things like sticks, feathers, and rattles, and even Jake-Ariel’s bird-like breakdance moves.
The creative cognitive processes; inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering was extremely useful in understanding how SITA performers enacted or performed the imaginary world of Prospero’s island. However, within the day-to-day placemaking during rehearsals, I was hesitant to label episodes as one thing or another. As St. Pierre argues, coding freezes action which can distort intention and outcomes. Instead, I followed Eisner’s suggestion that the cognitive creative processes should be understood as embarkation points rather than points of destination. “Once into the sea, the ship rides the currents of the ocean, which also help set the course” (p. 7). Consequently, I used inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering as analytical touchpoints to understand how the push and pull of the Arboretum on SITA members might be characterized. For example, the performers imbued the physical tree with meaning from the text by inscribing and then editing the split tree in the Arboretum as the “Ariel tree” of Prospero’s island.

The Arboretum participated with SITA as the creative medium during flows focusing on inscription such as selecting the sites for scenes and views. Sometimes the Arboretum served as a tool/tool provider (like harpy wing branches) to edit and communicate Prospero’s island as exemplified when the split tree became the Ariel tree and later the site of the harpy attack. Furthermore, the Arboretum participated as an agentive force by providing both inspiration and challenges to SITA members’ creations (like Anya’s costumes and Colin’s music).

The analyses of various imaginative engagements, both collective and individual, showed that SITA’s praxis included a series of imaginative engagements that brought forth emergent intentions. Performers and directors had strong but not fully-formed notions of what needed to happen and where. Found elements, like the tree branches for harpy wings, supported emergent trajectories that formed in response to the Arboretum and the inspiration that performers found there. The Shakespeare text acted as a guide for SITA members to imagine and explore the Arboretum in novel way by “discovering” elements of Prospero’s island within the physical Arboretum like the split tree. Therefore, the Arboretum served as inspiration and generative matrix to drive collaborative activity and artifact creation. The theatrical conventions and artifacts created by SITA exemplify how imaginative engagement was materialized in
the physical world to support SITA’s narrative placemaking. However, in addition to the inspiration that the Arboretum offered, it also provided limitations. For example, Anya and Colin to amend their artifacts and designs based on the constraints of the Arboretum. Finally, the representational theatrical conventions of staging, costumes, and music helped create the “world” in which a play or performance took place, and therefore were considered important tools to aid in SITA’s placemaking.

Summary

Examining how communities imagine with place provides evidence for how agentful topographies influence people’s activities and learning. The findings show how the Arboretum supported SITA members in constructing new images of themselves and their physical environment to explore their world in novel ways (Wenger 2010). The findings also show how imaginative engagement with place was both prompted by and manifested through textual interpretation, movement, and artifact making. Consequently, it was difficult to separate the agency of place from people and their tools because the activities were bound in a dynamic system (Ingold, 2011; Swist & Kuswara, 2016). SITA members’ imaginative engagement helped transform the Arboretum from raw material to dynamic artistic medium that pushed members to think creatively within the parameters of the physical Arboretum (Eisner, 2002).

For the SITA community, placemaking activities developed from a series of imaginative engagements that brought forth intentions. Performers imagined with the Arboretum by drawing on their personal experience and triangulating it with the physical landscape, found materials, theatrical conventions, and representational artifacts. Imaginative engagement with place can be active and intentional, such as having an idea or picture in one’s head, a mental blueprint, and then working it out in materiality as exemplified by costume mistress, Anya. Similarly, facilitative imagination with place also reflected problem-solving—collaboratively tinkering until something works. For example, the collaborative effort of Ariel-performers, Anya, Mona, and Karen, all contributed to creating and refining the harpy to ensure that the staging fit smoothly in the scene. Activities of imaginative engagement were
often collaborative in nature but could also be private and individualized as in the case of character empathy as illustrated by Meredith-Miranda.

SITA members, in concert with the Arboretum, made place through the creative cognitive processes of inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering. For SITA, the primacy of the Shakespeare text acted as a map and a guide—a way to explore the Arboretum in new ways. The text resembled a map that provided some details but was also incomplete. Therefore, SITA members had to fill in the gaps by using the materiality of the Arboretum and imaginative engagement to construct an imaginary place embedded in a physical space. SITA’s most concentrated placemaking was focused through the discovery of the split tree and inscribed as a feature of Prospero’s island. The split tree was then edited as the site of multiple scenes; the Ariel tree, Caliban’s cave, and the Harpy scene. Consequently, the split tree was also the site of the most concentrated activity to express and communicate place (music, costumes, props, and choreography) and was consistently the site of imaginative engagement and creative experimentation.

The data in these analyses are diverse and varied; therefore, to understand the themes across multiple formats and temporal episodes, I adapted the cognitive processes of creative representation—inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering (Eisner, 2002)—to guide my analysis. The processes allowed me to analyze imaginative engagement and creative processes across activities and mediums as I sought to understand what, when, and how SITA members incorporated their individual imaginative engagement into the group’s collective placemaking. Moreover, members’ imaginative insights shaped the creative trajectories of the entire production. I show how the Arboretum became an imaginative partner with SITA by helping to furnish theatrical conventions and tools to aid in placemaking (landscape as tool) and artistic medium (landscape as medium). The data also shows how the SITA community relied on various kinds of mapping techniques, such as using the Shakespeare text to guide what and where Prospero’s island might be within the physical Arboretum. Similarly, my use of performers’ character maps allowed participants to visualize and articulate their own nuanced, emplaced character empathy.
The analyses within this chapter were made possible by my emplacement with *The Tempest* text and my role as a performing pedagogue—a researcher who is interested how materials (in this case the materials and landscape of the Arboretum) helped SITA members perform (or enact) Prospero’s island. Furthermore, this role allowed me to observe how imaginative engagements were not just creative outputs but also pedagogical flows as SITA members made meaning as part of their placemaking praxis.

Applying Eisner’s creative cognitive processes elucidates the collaborative and creative learning aspects of placemaking. In the next chapter, I will use these four processes again in tandem with the concept of placemaking as meshworking to analyze SITA’s placemaking practices across its entire seventeen years of activity.
Chapter 6
Placemaking as Meshworking

Introduction

This chapter examines the SITA community’s longitudinal placemaking—how SITA’s practices with the Arboretum have developed over time. These analyses investigate practices that are both place-formed and place-forming. My analysis uses the theoretical orientation of placemaking as meshworking to understand how the SITA community inscribes and aligns their placemaking practices with the Arboretum. Meshwork is Ingold’s term to describe the fluid interconnection between organisms’ activity with their environment that consists of “lines of growth issuing from multiple sources,” which become “comprehensively entangled with one another.” The connections or “relational fields” among living things are described as interwoven lines of a meshwork: “It is within such a tangle of interlaced trails, continually raveling here and unraveling there, that beings grow or ‘issue forth’ along the lines of their relationships” (Ingold, 2007, p. 71). Through environmentally situated activities, living things are constituted within rhizomatic and mutual relationships (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Therefore, using a meshwork perspective interprets the processes of learning and meaning-making as being formed through and alongside a more-than-human system.

Ingold’s theoretical attention focuses on the lines of movement through a meshwork, rather than on the meshwork itself. I continue this approach by examining how both place and community change over time and together create fluid patterns of meaning. This chapter examines SITA’s placemaking praxis by analyzing its movement and activities across space and time in the Arboretum, rather than a particular Shakespeare story or theatrical production. In my study, I shift Ingold’s term to a verb to operationalize the meshwork metaphor. Therefore, meshwork becomes meshworking and consequently, placemaking as meshworking is my guiding contribution to investigate SITA’s activity with the Arboretum as an agentful topography.
My strategy to operationalize meshworking as an analytical tool is to examine how the SITA community inscribed and edited the space of the Arboretum over time. Therefore, I analyze SITA’s placemaking by categorizing and mapping how the community “makes lines” of various kinds of movement, meaning, and relationships with the Arboretum (both explicit and implicit), collectively described as meta-performance lines. Through this analysis, I map different kinds of data by layering the meta-performance lines to visualize the entangled connections that make up SITA’s placemaking practices.

The data used in my placemaking as meshworking analysis include:

a) Maps and interviews collected from senior SITA members that reflect on current and past performances
b) Observations of the rehearsal process
c) Informal discussion with performers during rehearsals
d) Historical photographs from past SITA productions
e) Photographic evidence collected from 2017 data collection

**Emplaced as a Member**

Examining SITA’s placemaking as meshworking allows me to understand how layers of meaning and experience associated with the Arboretum were imbricated into understandings of place over time. To do this, I incorporate my own experiences and recollections as a former performer and member of the SITA community. Rather than collecting or interpreting participant maps, I developed my own maps as a way to analyze the multimodal data that constituted SITA’s placemaking praxis and enactment of Shakespeare stories. The first step in creating meshworking maps, was to walk with Karen and Malcolm and roughly map several productions using the visitors map. Later, Malcolm, Mona and I walked the route of *Midsummer*, a production that all of us had performed (although at different times).
I rely on the four creative cognitive processes (Eisner, 2002)—inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering—to analytically move through the concept of placemaking as meshworking, as well as Corner’s Deleuzian-inspired mapping operations of *drift, layering, and rhizome* (1999). This analysis provided three findings. First, SITA made lines by inscribing the Arboretum with physical and conceptual lines of meaning that were often in concentrated areas. Second, SITA edited spaces in the Arboretum through continually *territorializing* and *deterritorializing spaces* for different productions. Finally, SITA built *archi-textures*, invisible structures of imbricated, affective meaning and uses throughout the Arboretum that in turn supported other kinds of placemaking behaviors.

**Using mapping operations: Drift, layering, and rhizome.** Mapping is the focal method of analysis in this chapter. As part of my findings I explain not only how I made maps, but also how I “read” them as *meshworking* texts (Ingold, 2011) by using Corner’s mapping operations of *drift, layering, and rhizome*. In Chapter 3, I was guided by the mapping operation of *drift*. Based on Debord’s concept of *derive*, drift as an operation of mapping that elicits everyday patterns and the idiosyncratic ways of understanding and navigating space. For example, the annotated maps of Stanley and Liza provided a variety of time-place events (specifically memorable walks or being chased by an owl) but also provided a sense of how the SITA participants used and experienced place. I apply a similar approach to mapping the meta-performance elements of SITA’s placemaking.

I use the mapping operation of *layering* to show how SITA’s multiple performances over time effect and interact with each other and informs my findings of territorialization/deterritorialization. In building planning and architectural contexts, layering different maps shows the complexity or intended program for the site. Layering reveals a complex fabric without a center, hierarchy, or single organizing principle. Like lines painted on a gym floor, one layer becomes legible only through the lens of the game or rules that apply (Corner, 1999). Consequently, viewing different layers at the same time allows for “hybrid” or new games to emerge. Drawn directly from the Deleuzian concept, a *rhizomatic* use of a map is one that “has no center and provides an infinite series of connections switches, relays and circuits for
activating matter and information” (p. 244). A rhizomatic reading of maps looks for new kinds of relationships and interconnections and thus depicts the shaping forces as well as the spatial terrain (Corner, 1999). Later in this chapter, rhizomatic readings of SITA’s maps help me identify and describe the effects of texture and archi-texture as an outcome SITA’s placemaking as meshworking.

Making Lines to Describe Forms of Inscription

For my first finding, I analyzed SITA’s placemaking by categorizing and mapping how the community made lines to describe the various ways SITA inscribed the Arboretum. SITA’s placemaking formed a series of lines that were both physical and conceptual, individual and collective. Making lines brings together the ideas of inscription from a material and representational perspective (Eisner, 2002), the mapping operation of drift (Corner, 1999) as well as the concept of inscribing practices within a community (Wenger, 2010). Consequently, making lines in terms of placemaking includes both physical and conceptual acts of inscription. The material and representational activity of making lines involves creating regions, borders, pathways, and trails. Similarly, conceptual lines are inscribed by movement, affect, and meaning-making.

Therefore, by following and combining various lines, I am able to map a visible meshwork structure of SITA’s placemaking. I analyze my data through graphically tracing these physical, conceptual, and embodied lines of SITA’s narrative placemaking to present a series of maps, which I then layer in order to visualize the kinds of meanings that are imbricated for SITA members over time. Layering (Corner, 1999) is another technique to help visualize where lines become entangled and form dense intersections or “knots” of concentrated meaning and affect for the SITA community.

SITA’s meta-performance lines. I describe four different types of meta-performance lines that I categorized by observing and participating in SITA activities; storylines, wanderlines, cue lines, and lines of sight. Mapping each type of line reveals a different form of meaning-making between the SITA community and the Arboretum.
The Arboretum’s ready-made paths were an important part of the meshwork of place, but here I focus on the more conceptual and abstract ways that SITA makes lines. The following line typology presents are my etic, analytical terms for the various kinds of activities (and to my knowledge were not used by past or current SITA members in practice in an emic sense).

**Storyline.** The storyline is the narrative of the play. The Shakespeare text is divided into acts and scenes, providing a basic structure of when to change the setting and move to another location of the Arboretum.

**Wanderline.** The wanderline exemplifies a wayfaring approach to movement in a meshwork. It also provides the synthesis of the physical Arboretum and textual places of the Shakespeare plays, like the forest of Avon of *As You Like It*, or Prospero’s Island of *The Tempest*. The wanderline is closely related to the storyline and is the scene-by-scene route of the play and the performers “onstage” movement in the performance. Figure 6-1 depicts wanderlines from five different plays, each color representing the route map of a production. Part of the performers’ task was to move the audience from scene to scene. Performers utilize wayfaring movement and responsiveness, not just for the sake of transporting to the next site of action but to support the storytelling process along the route of travel. Such a distinction of movement is of particular importance to SITA’s endeavors of storytelling with place.
Figure 6-1: Examples of SITA’s front-stage wanderlines. The route, or wanderlines of five plays, demarcated with different colors: green-*Midsummer Night’s Dream*; Pink-*Tempest*, 2010; orange-*Love’s Labor's Lost*; yellow-*Winter's Tale*; blue-*Tempest* 2017.

There are two different forms of wanderlines, the public “front stage” and the unseen, hidden trails that the performers used to get from scene to scene. The unseen or “backstage” lines are created out of necessity or convenience. Backstage wanderlines also included spaces where performers waited for their scene, changed costume, or found hiding places for props, water, or extra bug spray. Backstage wanderlines are important because they often are personal—created or discovered. As Malcolm explained, “You don’t really know the Arb, you don’t really start finding things until you are actually running the shows. During performances. . . you have to find all the back ways. You find your own spaces” (Dudek field notes, 5.18). As evidenced by Malcolm’s statement, backstage wanderlines are personal, idiosyncratic, and changeable, depending on the production, weather, or other variables. Wanderlines, together with the Shakespearean storylines, create the basis of SITA’s placemaking meshwork.

*Cue lines.* Cue lines bridge the text and physical space. Cue lines are based on the lines of Shakespeare text and link the performer’s speech and movement to particular areas, features, and trails of the Arboretum. For example, during Jake’s interview, he referred to the stand of trees with his favorite
minty smell as “thou liest trees,” conceptually linking his spoken lines of “Thou liest!” to the physical space in the Arboretum where he delivered them. Textual lines such as these generally are the cue or the catalyst for action in the production, such as a movement, entrance, exit, or the introduction of a prop. Memorizing blocking is as important as memorizing lines. Often the language cues and movement cues work together as mutual mnemonic devices. Therefore, certain spaces in the Arboretum, along with certain movements, become codified with the lines that are spoken in or near them.

In addition to examples of the cue line as points of spatial reference, illustrated by Jake’s example, the emplaced force of the cue lines was also evidenced in several participants’ illustrated, interpretive maps (see Figure 6-2). For example, Corryn’s map, an Ariel performer, included a dramatic rendering of the split tree/Ariel tree, the site where Prospero made “gape the pine,” and also the site of the harpy attack. Corryn rendered the scale and bulk of the physical tree in the Arboretum and added Ariel’s first line of the play, which the performers spoke in unison: “All hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come, To answer thy best pleasure; be’t to fly, To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride, On the curl’d clouds, to thy strong bidding task Ariel and all his quality.” Corryn’s cue line demonstrated Ariel’s multi-elemental “quality” of air, water, and fire, a detail Corryn also included in their map. Three participants, in total, included a specific cue line on their map. Corryn’s map illustrates that cue lines can be quite personal—connected specifically with a performer’s line or scene. At the same time, cue lines are generally recognized and associated with the Arboretum’s features by most of the SITA cast of each production.
Figure 6-2: Map created by Corryn-Ariel. It features the split tree and an Ariel cue line—“to thy strong bidding task Ariel and all his quality.” The map also includes annotations of the sea, mountains, Prospero’s cell, books and clothes (props that are described in the text.)

Cue lines represent the movement through both the text and physical space of the Arboretum. Consequently, when experienced SITA members passed a particular physical feature of the Arboretum, they were often able to quote lines spoken in that area from past productions. Therefore, the embodiment of the cue line and its associated blocking were viscerally linked with physical spaces of the Arboretum.

**Sightlines.** Sightlines represent another aspect of wayfaring in SITA’s praxis. Sightlines are the particular views afforded to performers who must remain unseen until they are cued for action in the performance. In a traditional stage production, performers have the advantage of being backstage or in the side wings of a theater. When performing on a large, open, spatial scale, however, performers needed to be vigilant and observe a variety of visual, auditory, or environmental cues. For example, Oliver, who played the butler Stephano, showed me how he had to partly scale a small tree that provided a sightline of a scene while keeping him hidden from the audience.
Oliver: Once I see Juan [a fellow performer playing Caliban] start moving down the hill (on the other side of the valley) I know I have about two minutes to get in place all the way over there (points to a clearing several yards down a hill) ’cause I can’t hear Prospero’s cue.

The use of sightlines, as described by Michael, exemplifies the wayfaring responsiveness of the performers. Performers must be observant, mindful, and present to make sure that they were in the right place at the right time. Performers’ movement was dependent on the space, their fellow performers, and the audience. Backstage wanderlines and sightlines like Micheal's represent SITA’s wayfaring practice as fundamentally emergent, responsive, and mindful. Over time, these various lines create a meta-performance meshwork. Each kind of line is a way that the SITA community inscribed the Arboretum.

Mapping Productions Using Meta-Performance Lines

The next step of my analysis provides a comparison of two productions, *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in which I was a performer in 2005/2010, and the 2017 *Tempest* production in which I was the researcher. It is useful to compare and contrast the two plays to visualize how SITA’s meta-performance lines form a meshwork of meaning and activity. These two plays are helpful to compare for several reasons. First, the two productions use similar areas, illustrating how lines and meaning are imbricated over time. Next, I use *Midsummer* as a comparable example because several of the performers (Malcolm, Mona, and Charlie, for example) in this study participated in both productions (2016, 2017, respectively). I also draw on my firsthand experience performing in *Midsummer* to guide my analysis. Finally, both productions had a more-than-human or rather not-quite human-element. They shared the theme of enchanted spaces and fairy characters, which is particularly informative for discussions of affect and imagination.
I mapped the converging meta-performance lines by walking through the Arboretum with SITA’s director, Karen, along with Malcolm and Mona. In these walks, I noted the wanderlines on the Arboretum’s visitor’s map. Next, referencing both dramatic scripts of the plays, I then noted the important cue lines for *The Tempest*, based on my observations of the rehearsal process. For *Midsummer*, I added the cue lines based on my experience of performing, and I corroborated their accuracy with Mona and Malcolm. Finally, I strategically mapped scenes from the two productions to understand how the imbrication of lines was created in spaces shared by the productions.

The two tables (Table 6-1 and 6-2) provide the data from meta-performance lines. To map the storyline, I list the basic thrust of the scene and action. I did not include every scene from the productions but focused on the shared spaces of each play. Then, I marked the Arboretum’s feature or area where the scene took place. Next, I provide a significant cue line for that scene and area. Finally, each selected scene and corresponding lines were given an identifier on the map. Identifiers from *The Tempest* are designated by numbers, while letters are used for those in *Midsummer*.

Table 6-1: Meta-performance lines of The *Tempest* 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storyline</th>
<th>Arboretum Feature in Wanderline</th>
<th>Map Identification Key</th>
<th>Cue Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shipwreck Prologue</td>
<td>Heathdale</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Put the wild waters in this roar, ally them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospero’s sleeping charm and</td>
<td>In front of Oberon tree, near</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>To thy strong bidding task, Ariel and all his quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariel’s last charge</td>
<td>boardwalk on the edge of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Split tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caliban’s home</td>
<td>Split tree east</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I must eat my dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovers meet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipwrecked sailors</td>
<td>East Valley south hill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Though this island seems desert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Line Number</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fools meet Caliban</td>
<td>East Valley south hill</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Here’s neither bush nor scrub to shake off any weather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lover’s scene and</td>
<td>East Valley center</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>I must remove some thousand logs and pile them up // thou liest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harpy</td>
<td>Split tree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>I and my fellows are ministers of fate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fools clothesline</td>
<td>East Valley north hill</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Monster I do smell all horse piss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion</td>
<td>Edge of the Main Valley</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I’ll drown my books.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-2: Meta-performance lines of *Midsummer Night’s Dream* 2005/2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storyline</th>
<th>Feature in the Wanderline</th>
<th>Map Identification Key</th>
<th>Cue Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oberon and Titania</td>
<td>Heathdale</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Ill met by moonlight proud Titania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberon and Pucks</td>
<td>Oberon tree and the edge of the Main Valley</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>I remember.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermia and Lysander</td>
<td>Edge of the Main Valley</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Good Lysander, lie further off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rude Mechanicals</td>
<td>Juniper bushes (no longer there)</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>And neigh and bark and snort and burn!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titania and fairy bower</td>
<td>East Valley</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>I pray thee gentle mortal sing again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lover mismatch</td>
<td>East Valley log (no longer there)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Lord what fools these mortals be!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duel and fight</td>
<td>East Valley</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>I am not yet made so low my nails cannot reach unto thine eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanicals reunited</td>
<td>Heathdale path</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Where are these lads, where are these hearts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding and play within play</td>
<td>Beech tree in the peony garden</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>What thy mantle good? Stained with blood?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I generated maps from the tables that provide the physical locus for converging lines. In the next section, I will discuss each map individually, compare, and then layer the maps to visualize the emergent and entangled meanings that make up SITA’s placemaking meshwork.

**Mapping the lines of The Tempest.** Most of *The Tempest* was staged at the edge of the Main Valley and East Valley. Figure 6-3 illustrates the information in map form from Table 6-1. The legend provides the details of the map and symbols: scene and cue line identifiers, the performers’ wanderlines, and the routes of their movement within the scene (frontstage), while the dotted line represents the backstage lines. The Oberon tree is marked along with the split tree for reference. As described in Chapter 5, the split tree or Ariel tree in the Arboretum was the site of concentrated action.

![Figure 6-3: Meta-performance lines of 2017 Tempest. The map corresponds to Table 6-1.](image)

The prologue of 2017 *The Tempest* started with the audience being led from the peony garden (the traditional pre-show gathering area) down through the Heathdale. The Heathdale was used to support a silent prologue that set the somber mood described by the Shakespeare text. The shipwrecked characters scattered themselves across the Heathdale as if they were separated and lost. The play began on the border...
of the Heathdale and Main Valley by the boardwalk. The play then moved into the East Valley, with much of the action focused around the split tree as well as utilizing the north, south and west end of the valley. The play finished about thirty meters from where it began near the boardwalk.

**Mapping the lines of Midsummer.** *Midsummer* used a very similar route. However, there was much more movement across the Arboretum for both audience and performers. The play started and ended in the peony garden and winded its way through the Heathdale, the edge of the Main Valley, and the East Valley area, and then retraced the route back up to the peony garden. Compared to *The Tempest*, the characters had more range of movement and made more use of backstage wanderlines. Figure 6-4 illustrates the meta-performance lines and table information described in Table 6-2. Again, not all the scenes of the play are described.

![Map Key Midsummer](image)

Figure 6-4: Meta-performance lines of 2010/2016 *Midsummer*. The map corresponding to Table 6-2.

*Midsummer* made use of the Heathdale as an important site of ‘magic’ that was inhabited by non-human fairies. The Heathdale was reminiscent of an Appalachian valley, a secluded cove nestled east and
below the Peony Garden with ericaceous plants, rhodendrens, azaleas, and large pines. There were several winding foot trails and a wide mulch path. The trees provided noise cover from the rest of the Arboretum. The canopy provided a great deal of shade, filtering only dappled light, even on the sunniest days. All these characteristics make it, as Malcolm describes, “one of the most magical” areas of the Arboretum. For this reason, the audience was split into two groups and led down two different trails. Dividing the audience reduced the foot traffic of the descent and supported the feeling of what Elliot described as “going deep” into the Arboretum. When walking down the Heathdale trails, people could no longer see the city or hospital buildings. Like The Tempest’s split tree, the Heathdale was the site of concentrated affect and activity.

Layering maps and identifying knots. Through mapping the various lines, I identified several affectively charged places that were imbued or entangled with multiple meanings. In these places, multiple lines of meaning-making (i.e., wanderlines and cue lines) converge into dense but often invisible knots that make up SITA’s placemaking. To show how meta-performance lines converged with each other, I layered The Tempest map over the Midsummer map. The result provides a very dense meshwork spanning the Heathdale and East Valley (Figure 6-5).

From these combined maps, ‘knots’ emerged at the convergence of the paths in the Heathdale and the Oberon tree and encompassing the entire East Valley. The image from the layered map represents only two out of eight plays that use other parts of the Arboretum (see Figure 6-1). Therefore, the scope of SITA’s meshwork of meta-performance lines is much broader and more diverse than what is illustrated here however, this map provides a sense of the totality of SITA’s placemaking.
Figure 6-5: Layered map of *Tempest* and *Midsummer* meta-performance lines. Layering the maps illustrates dense areas of concentration of meaning that I refer to as knots.

**Layering personal lines.** It is important to take into account members’ other non-SITA associations with the Arboretum to fully understand the intricacies of meshworking as placemaking. In Chapter 4, I discussed the various associations and relationships with the Arboretum that people brought with them to their SITA experience. Layering personal lines atop the collective meta-performance lines provides analytical depth to the data, illustrating the deeply intricate patterns of meaning across the Arboretum.

For example, consider a long-standing SITA member such as Stanley. Stanley's map, which I provide an excerpt here, is then layered upon SITA’s meta-performance lines (Figure 6-6). The layered personal map provides an example of what an individual’s meshwork map might look like for a life-long Arboretum dweller and long-standing SITA member.
Here, meshworking is fully expressed as the lines become entangled in ‘knots of meaning’ that ‘bind’ place, people, and feeling together (Ingold, 2007). Thus, this concentration of ‘knots’ within the already ‘thick’ space of the Arboretum (Casey, 2001; Duff, 2010) creates the Arboretum’s specific affective texture. Knots were especially concentrated around the Heathdale, Oberon tree, and East Valley, and new meanings were created as the spaces were edited and inhabited. Meshworking is made visible
here by tracing SITA’s lines to expose the “hidden topographies” that SITA has created with the Arboretum (Corner, 1999 p. 237).

Furthermore, meshworking conveys the semiotic resources and meaning-making connected with place such as language (cue lines), movement (wanderlines), perception, and observation (lines of sight). Making lines contributes to placemaking as it describes the various ways that people inscribe place. Making lines entails various kind of mapping and making lines visible can reveal nuanced and interconnections within a more-than-human-system.

**Inscribing and Editing Space Through Territorializing/ Deterritorializing**

The second finding from applying the concept of placemaking as meshworking is that the community both inscribed and edited spaces within the Arboretum by the duel processes of territorializing and deterritorializing. Editing space is the process of working on inscriptions (in SITA’s case, the various types of lines) until the lines achieve the “desired affect or clarity.” The editing process, therefore, provides opportunities to modify the externalized space, “by investigating its features, identifying flaws or weaknesses,” to render the space’s “expressive power more acute” (Eisner, 2002, p. 6).

I use the Deleuzian terms of territorializing/ deterritorializing, as they provide a cultural-spatial quality to how SITA edits the space of the Arboretum continually as a community. Territorializing/ deterritorializing means to transform or remove cultural subjects and objects from a certain location in space and time (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1987; Colebrook, 2011). While the term ‘editing’ conjures a kind of fixedness, parties may trade territories back and forth—as the physical environment remains relatively constant. Thus, territorialization conveys the idea of new lines, stories, and paths imposed on already existing spaces.

**Territorializing the Arboretum as a performance space.** SITA must territorialize/ deterritorialize spaces in the Arboretum without building structures or physically changing the landscape. An example of deterritorialization is illustrated by the description in Malcolm’s interview when he related
how the first production of *Midsummer* changed peoples’ attitudes towards the Arboretum because “nobody had thought about it as a performance space.” Thus, changing people’s perception of the Arboretum from a massive, semi-feral park, to an intimate, creative performance space was an act of territorialization. Territorializing is especially pertinent to SITA contexts since their place-editing was more conceptual and affective in nature, rather than material or structural.

**Reterritorializing features within the Arboretum.** In Chapter 5, I discussed how SITA edited spaces by making use of theatrical conventions to reuse, transform, or incorporate new features of the physical Arboretum into the world of the play. For instance, the discovery of the split tree produced a highly affective perception, consequently rendering the East Valley into a ‘new’ and interesting space. Similarly, the process of discovery supported feelings of open ownership and invited performers to edit as they saw fit. The discovery of the split tree furnished a highly dramatic piece of staging, particularly in terms of the harpy scene. The tree was inscribed as a part of the imaginary world of the play and was territorialized by SITA members, especially the Ariel ensemble. Figure 6-7 illustrates how the split tree was edited or territorialized as a new space within *The Tempest* production.

![Figure 6-7: Editing the split tree in *The Tempest*. The focal cracked and exposed roots of the split tree served as the site of Caliban’s cave (left), Ariel tree and harpy scene (right).](image)

The audience first encountered the split tree as the home of Caliban, the wild-man inhabitant of the island. Later the tree was the site where the lovers met, and finally, the frightening harpy scene. Scene changes and transitions within a single production was often facilitated by changes in movement, music,
costumes, and props. While Chapter 5 investigated the editing of space within a single play, the same process can be applied across productions and SITA’s collective praxis. Consequently, territorialization/deterritorialization describes the overall editing process across SITA’s placemaking, while editing refers to actions within a single production or narrative world.

In the next section, I continue tacking back and forth between historical accounts of previous SITA productions and 2017 Tempest. Based on the intersection of storylines/wanderlines (see Figure 6-1), three areas emerged as being used most within the productions, an observation corroborated by participant interviews: the Heathdale, the East Valley, and Magnolia Glen. Features in these areas tended to be re-used in different productions, becoming part of the place-based repertoire of the performers. For example, Figure 6-8 depicts the log in Magnolia Valley in As You Like It, 2011, and Much Ado About Nothing, 2013.

![Figure 6-8: Log in Magnolia Glen. Sword fight in As You Like It, 2011(left). Setting a trap for Beatrice, Much Ado About Nothing (right), 2013 (photo credit Kent McCormick).](image)

The log depicted in the production photos above is the same log described by Malcolm during his interview as one of his favorite SITA-related places in the Arboretum. As described earlier, at the time of the study, the log was no longer there. Features like the log were important as the sites of continual territorialization and reterritorialization, which must be rendered anew when utilized for a different
production. In the next section, I provide two examples of how SITA territorialized/de-territorialized familiar spaces in the Arboretum and how the overall process changes how visitors experienced the Arboretum.

Figure 6-9: Two views of the “Oberon tree” willow near the boardwalk. Pucks and Oberon in Midsummer 2016 in willow tree tableau(right). Malcolm-Propero with Ariel ensemble in Tempest 2017 with willow tree behind (left).

**Oberon tree as a gathering space.** I continue my comparison of Midsummer and The Tempest by examining the use and visibility of what SITA members called the Oberon tree. Figure 6-9 (left) depicts Oberon sitting in the willow tree near the boardwalk. Once the audience settled, Oberon descended to the Pucks below by walking down the length of the branch. The tableau is well known to longtime SITA audiences. The same tree is used as the backdrop for the first scene with Prospero and the Ariels (Figure 6-9, right).

In Midsummer, the tree was directly implicated as an extension of Oberon. Oberon’s malice was on display in the scene, and the skeletal form of the branches continued the visual association with Oberon as a lurking, destructive force. Moreover, Oberon’s affect was contrasted with the whimsical and impish Pucks as they played below. In The Tempest, the tree and its broken branches were passively reterritorialized as part of Prospero’s island by providing a backdrop to the scene. The downed limbs and broken branches suggested Prospero’s conjured Tempest-storm described by Miranda in the opening scene, but do not communicate Prospero’s internal qualities or provide a vehicle for affective movement as illustrated in the Oberon example.
Despite the different direct uses of the Oberon tree in each production, there were several similarities in the kinds of actions the site around the tree supported. Earlier in this chapter, I explained how Midsummer and The Tempest were convenient plays to compare because they used similar areas in the Arboretum and had a similar dynamic of what I will call emplaced magic. Both worlds of the plays were infused with magical characters that were derived from and manipulated nature: Oberon, Titania, Pucks (Midsummer) and Prospero, Caliban, and Ariels (Tempest). On closer examination, the two scenes depicted in Figure 6-9 function similarly as a narrative device.

In both scenes, the master of each narrative (Oberon and Prospero, respectively) beckoned and gathered their magical minions together (Pucks and Ariels). Each master assigned a task and then sent their minions forth “deeper” into the Arboretum. Consequently, by using this space in a similar fashion across two subsequent productions, SITA not only inscribed the area of each play but territorialized the area writ large as a magic quest region—a meeting and sending forth space. I corroborate this observation with two anecdotes.

The first anecdote is from one of The Tempest performances I attended. I walked with the audience while taking field notes and listening to their conversations as they moved between scenes before setting up my camera. I witnessed a conversation with a child about age eight and her mother. The pair were walking across the boardwalk path, looking for a place to spread out their blanket on the ground to watch the scene. As they walked, the mother asked, “Do you remember this place from last year?” The girl nodded her head and responded with something affirmative that I could not hear. Then the mom said, “I wonder what is going to happen here now?” The child paused, looked in the direction of the willow tree and excitedly said “more fairies?” Her mother responded that she didn’t know and they would have to wait to find out.

This episode provided an insight into how audience members become inculcated in SITA’s territorialization of the Arboretum—how they experience, remember, and use SITA’s placemaking for their own meaning-making purposes. Although the child was rather young, she remembered something
special about the place when prompted by her mother. While I do not know if the child remembered the complicated plot twists of *Midsummer*, she certainly remembered and anticipated seeing something interesting, if not magical, in that willow tree. Similarly, I do not know if the child or her mother knew *The Tempest* story, but that had little bearing on what transpired. In the previous year, SITA had inscribed that area and territorialized the space with fairies. The child made an educated guess that the Arboretum would issue forth more fairies, and she was not disappointed.

The second anecdote is based on the general use and affordances of the Oberon tree area. The area is a natural gathering place as it was situated near the boardwalk path that led to both the river and Heathdale. It was also on the edge of the Heathdale and the Main Valley. Because of these affordances, the SITA-inscribed “Oberon tree” was often reterritorialized by other Arboretum visitors who lounged around its branches, not unlike Oberon (see Figure 6-9).

![Image](image-url)

**Figure 6-10**: The Oberon tree territorialized by Arboretum visitors and their hammock. In the foreground the Ariel ensemble, Stanley-Prospero rehearsal near the Oberon tree. In the background, two visitors (non-SITA members) enjoy the nice weather by setting up their hammock in the tree.

This episode corroborated the ways that the Oberon tree was a natural gathering place within the Arboretum and demonstrated how the use of space and addition or subtraction of artifacts (in this case, a Shakespeare scene and a hammock) reterritorialize the tree to function in different ways. This episode
also underlines the public and open nature of the Arboretum. Furthermore, SITA was one of many groups within the larger community that used and shared the Arboretum.

It is important to note that territorializing/deterritorialization is not a grand eraser. The processes do not wipe things clean or offer a tabula rasa; instead, these editing processes leave behind traces. Building upon these observations, my third finding is focused on the traces left from SITA’s placemaking.

**Archi-texture: How SITA Contributes to the Arboretum’s Affective and Physical texture**

The third finding is that SITA’s meshworking, its physical and conceptual traces, support other peoples’ emergent placemaking. Previously, I focused my analysis on how the Arboretum shapes SITA’s activities. However, in this last section, I illustrate how SITA has shaped the Arboretum—how the community’s placemaking activities over time have added to the texture of the Arboretum. I use the concept of *archi-texture*, adapted from Lefebvre (1991) and Ellsworth (2005), to describe the non-representational structures ‘built’ by SITA and to show how they add meaning or “texture” to the landscape that is sensed or felt by others. The term’s usefulness is rendered in its ability to describe the composite of text, texture, and construction of SITA’s placemaking.

First, I describe what I mean by place’s *texture* and explain why *archi-texture* is appropriate for describing the lines that SITA lays down in a Deleuzian sense. I then turn my research gaze beyond the SITA community to understand how its placemaking created highly affective, textured spaces that transcend a particular play or Shakespeare story. These textures encourage other people to enact and discover their own dwelling and placemaking in the Arboretum.

**Text and texture.** Viewing places as having similar qualities as texts—collections of materials that can be read, interpreted, and translated—provides additional insight into placemaking, illustrating how people engage and make meaning with place. Previous chapters have already described how SITA used the Shakespeare text, language, and story to support imaginative engagement and meaning-making
through its placemaking activities. In Chapter 5, for example, I described how the performers found
textual symmetry in the Arboretum’s landscape and how performers used dramatic roles as empathetic
lenses. In this chapter’s section on making lines, I showed how the performers used cue lines as physical
markers. Building on the previous analyses, I draw upon the association with text and texture as
synthesizing forces that provide Arboretum dwellers (not just SITA members) information to construct
their own meaning.

Texture expands people’s engagement with the Arboretum. The texture of the Arboretum
encourages wayfarers—mindfully present, moving people—to explore and improvise. The next two
examples show how SITA’s placemaking transformed the Arboretum by leveraging its co-constructed
archi-texture for audiences and broader community members. I provide two examples of this
phenomenon. The first is an anecdote taken from Malcolm’s one-on-one interview, and the second is
from my time with The Tempest production.

**SITA’s placemaking and audience reception.** The placemaking that I investigate does not begin
and end with SITA, as the audience too is a collaborative force. Malcolm provided an anecdote during his
one-on-one interview that is emblematic of the ways that SITA helped facilitate the broader community’s
relationship with the Arboretum by inviting audiences into their placemaking activities. When Malcolm
described the early productions, he related the ‘nicest compliment’ that he ever received about SITA,
which was from the director of the college.

*Malcolm:* He came to see it, and he came up to me and said that he had been coming to the Arb
for twenty years and in **this single performance we had completely changed the way he would**
**look at the Arb,** afterward. Specifically, in the first staging with Oberon coming down the hill
[Heathdale] and staging...he said he had been there a million times and he had never thought
about what was up in those spaces at the top, and now every time he would go past, he would think about that.

The administrator's comment illustrates that in a few minutes, STIA territorialized the Arboretum, particularly the Heathdale, as a ‘magic place’ and a performance space. SITA used the physical texture of the Arboretum and the Shakespeare text to create a transformational archi-texture that changed how the administrator viewed the space. Although meaning builds over time, it can become edited, overturned, or transformed in an instant. SITA’s placemaking lays down new lines that reorient Arboretum visitors to other possibilities.

**Fairy Woods and Troll Hollow.** Fairy Woods and Troll Hollow are examples of how a new space and activity emerged from and were supported by, SITA’s continual placemaking in the Arboretum. During the inaugural production of *Midsummer* (2002), a stand of pine trees near the peony garden was the location of a highly affective scene. In this area and scene, the audience saw fairies for the first time. It was the scene where the audience interacted with more-than-human characters that crawled up trees, threw pinecones, made animal sounds, and generally behaved in non-human ways (see Figure 6-11).
After several *Midsummer* seasons, the area became associated by general visitors as a place where fairies dwell. The area became a popular play space for families with small children utilizing sticks and pinecones. The remnants of their play were often in the shape of “fairy houses” or tiny structures resembling dwellings. Fairy-house making was so pervasive that the Arboretum management created a sign demarcating the area as an official place for children to play around 2009 (see Figure 6-12).

Figure 6-11: Pine tree ridge area during 2010 *Midsummer* performance with Fairy Woods and Troll Hollow sign.

Figure 6-12: Fairy Woods and Troll Hollow sign. Sign demarcating the pine tree area officially as Fairy Woods and Troll Hollow encourages play at the site.
Items such as silk flowers, nut shells, and wood cookies were left by tiny visitors and replenished by bigger ones. This area was reterritorialized by children and others who left behind tiny assembled structures. These items, in turn, furnished the materials for new structures, allowing people to imagine, build, and enact their own stories. Furthermore Fairy woods and Troll Hollow exemplify the generative matrix that Corner describes through the operation of layering. When multiple uses and meanings are layered on top of each other (and enacted or made visible) new “hybrid games” can emerge.

Figure 6-13 is a single example of at least six distinct structures that were visible during one of The Tempest rehearsal days.

Figure 6-13: Miniature forest dwelling. Example of tiny structures in Fairy Woods and Troll Hollow area. Researcher’s shoes included for scale.

These tiny dwellings illustrate the process of texturizing place, evident through four key dynamics. First, SITA inscribed and edited a space, imbuing it with fairy-rich archi-texture during a production. Second, SITA’s ongoing use of the space and imaginative engagement provided creative, affective, and narrative support for other people’s placemaking. Third, the Arboretum, as an institution, inscribed the space as an official play area. Finally, children and families reterritorialized the space by
making playful use of it. Therefore, the archi-texture of feeling and possibility could be felt or read by others visiting the space, even if they had never seen a SITA production.

Thick places, places of concentrated meaning and affect, accentuated SITA participants’ everyday experience of the Arboretum. Such experiences mesh areas together in a constitutive and resonant expression of community belonging (Duff, 2010). Similarly, mapping operations that exposed “hidden topographies” within everyday spaces also revealed how certain features of the Arboretum were constantly in a cycle of de/reterritorialization based on the pragmatic or creative needs of SITA and the broader community (Corner, 1999). For example, the texture and traces left behind by SITA’s placemaking, those that give rise to spaces like *Fairy Woods and Troll Hollow*, support the larger community’s placemaking in similar ways. Found objects like sticks and pinecones were tiny tools and materials, different only in scale to branches used as Harpy wings, add to the Arboretum’s archi-texture. Consequently, SITA’s placemaking expands the community’s participation with the Arboretum.

**Meshworking Informs Placemaking**

I illustrate how a place-based community engages with, imagines across, and inscribes and aligns practices with an agentful topography. The findings are achieved by using the concept of placemaking as meshworking to describe SITA participants’ activities and relationship with the Arboretum. Placemaking, in SITA’s case, becomes a “charged orchestration” (Ellsworth, 2005 p. 38.) of bodies, texts, place, and paths. Together with the Arboretum, the community’s meshworking created immersive imagined places of SITA’s theatrical repertoire.

SITA’s mobility helps *make place with* the Arboretum rather than using it as simply a setting or a space to move through. Therefore, SITA’s wayfaring represents mindful, present, and intentional movement that is both a product and process of its placemaking. Furthermore, wayfaring describes how the SITA community inscribes spaces and practices in the Arboretum through their movement and paths, while drift describes how that wayfaring was mapped and analyzed. Visitors to the Arboretum usually stay on the paths or on maintained flat grassy areas. However, SITA’s placemaking created more
opportunities for moving through the Arboretum in different ways, which in turn, created highly textured dwelling spaces—places that are affectively charged and dense with meaning.

SITA inscribed the Arboretum in physical and conceptual ways by making lines. The entanglement of these lines, along with bodies, tools, artifacts, and materials, make up a more-than-human meshwork. While the tangles of place are rarely made visible, they are most certainly felt. Wayfaring describes how the performers move through the Arboretum and how they gather materials like branches for props or utilize previous meta-performance lines (cue lines, wanderlines, etc.) to aid them in their placemaking. Editing place becomes the dual process of territorializing/deterritorializing, transforming or removing cultural subjects and objects from certain locations in space and time.

Texture is how a place feels. Through the operation of layering, I was able to identify the knots that help constitute the flexible archi-textures of SITA’s placemaking. This analysis was accomplished through the mapping of meta-performance lines, many of which had a text or narrative-based component. SITA went beyond making the places described in the Shakespeare text visible. The goal of the performers was to communicate something about how the dramatic places feel. Therefore, I refine the concept of archi-texture to underscore how knots of meaning contribute to how a place feels. This term helps elucidate how the Arboretum’s archi-texture (another example of rhizomatic text) can be read, interpreted, or translated by others for their own use.

*Placemaking as meshworking* is a way to describe embodied and emergent, more-than-human activity (Marin & Bang, 2018). Within the SITA context, place formed and was formed by the participants, meaning that the Arboretum is a multiplicity. It is all at once an artistic medium, co-agent, and creative tool. With the Arboretum serving all these functions, the SITA community engaged in the cognitive processes of inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering that make its placemaking praxis. Therefore, the decentralized concept of meshworking is an apt metaphor to visualize the complex web of meaning and activity that the SITA community create with the Arboretum.
Maps as poststructural artifacts and analysis. Creating maps of SITA’s meta-performance lines and then applying Corner’s Deleuzian informed cartographic agencies of drift, layering, and rhizome (1999) offer different ways that SITA’s praxis can be described. Furthermore, cartographic agencies reveal how SITA’s continual dwelling with the Arboretum changed how other vistors may experience it. I was able to clearly identify the affectively charged places that were imbued or entangled with multiple meanings. Through mapping the various lines, I found where multiple lines of meaning-making (i.e., wanderlines and cue lines) converged into dense but often invisible knots that were part of SITA’s architecture and contribute to the Arboretum's overall texture. Layering maps of the different productions' meta-performance lines (meshworking maps), as well as participants’ annotated maps, revealed the complex fabric of meaning, movement and experience, yet one without a center, hierarchy, or single organizing principle. Thus, my meshworking maps function as rhizomatic texts in their own right.

One way that people make meaning with place is through mapping. Maps are created and used because they illustrate relationships that would be harder to grasp if portrayed through text or numbers (Eisner, 2002). At the same time, the conceptual inscription of the shared repertoire of communal resources such as routines, artifacts, Arb-based theatrical conventions, and stories represent very different kinds of terrain. To be an experienced member of SITA as a place-based community is to have access to both kinds of maps and be able to use them appropriately.

Summary

In this portion of the meshworking analysis, I take a similar approach described in Chapter 5 by using the creative cognitive processes as analytical touchpoints to understand placemaking as meshworking. I use the processes as a way to categorize and analyze SITA’s praxis and to describe how placemaking is performed or enacted in ways that change how the Arboretum is used and understood by the larger community. In this chapter, I analyze how SITA community members inscribed, edited, communicated, and discovered across several productions to understand the scope of SITA’s placemaking. The longitudinal applications of inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering are the
mechanisms that make up the bulk of SITA’s praxis. From these analyses, I found how new place-based meaning and placemaking practices emerged, or put another way, how established entanglements gave rise to new lines. I specifically elucidate how SITA’s ongoing placemaking, the community’s continual use and dwelling in the Arboretum, can be understood as meshworking.

I yoked two theoretical orientations together to understand how the SITA community aligned and inscribed practices across their placemaking. I used Eisner’s creative cognitive processes of representation to guide my analyses. From the analysis of SITA’s collective activities, I applied placemaking as meshworking and drew from poststructurally influenced cartographic and spatial language. Using SITA as a case upon which to generate concepts, this meshworking analysis offers three theoretical refinements to the idea of placemaking: making lines, territorializing/deterritorializing space, and building archi-textures.
Chapter 7

Discussion and Implications

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the attributes of agentful topographies as learning partners that support activities that are enactive (Thompson, 2010; McGann et.al, 2013; Fuchs, & de Jaegher, 2009), embodied (Rowland, 2010; Harrison, 2000; Clark, 2008), and entangled in a more-than-human learning system (Sørenson, 2009; Ingold, 2007; 2011). I also summarize my contributions to the study of placemaking using poststructural orientations. I lay out the contributions of this dissertation:

1.) By employing the concept of agentful topographies, this dissertation broadly acknowledged the ways that place as dynamic bundles of materials influence and shaped human activity and meaning for the SITA community. Therefore, this work expands the role that place has as a collaborative partner in learning.

2.) By analyzing data with the prior conceptions of creative cognitive processes put forth by Eisner (2002), this dissertation asserts that placemaking is a non-linear creative act of representation, mediated by human and place’s agency. Thereby, broadening conceptions of creative cognitive processes to also be used in placemaking and place-based learning.

3.) Adding the meshworking concepts of making lines, territorializing/deterritorializing, and archi-textures informs the study of placemaking with theoretical contributions from poststructural theory that assumes a more-than-human approach to learning. This work now offers an empirical example of meshworking that refines placemaking as creative, collaborative, and pedagogical charged activities along with adjacent methods of emplacement.
4.) This work advocates for and adds to the use of methods and techniques aligned with sensory ethnography as well as the collection and analysis of affective and non-representational data. This study offers an empirical example of how meshworking (as a way of making and moving) and methodological emplacement (as a way of being, feeling, and seeing) work in tandem. Furthermore, this study encourages further research to be undertaken in a similar scholarly wayfaring spirit to diverse contexts and content.

I argued that the Arboretum is an agentful topography, or in other words, a dynamic learning partner that actively shapes SITA members’ social activity. To support this concept and that of placemaking as a creative and collaborative endeavor, I used theoretical orientations from art education and poststructural inspired concepts such as meshwork. Further, I drew from community of practice literature (Wenger, 2010) to structure my research because I conceived the Arboretum to be a more-than-human member of the community. Accordingly, I needed to understand how the Arboretum supported and shaped SITA’s engagement, imagination, practices, and activity. Placemaking as meshworking illustrates that the intentional ways that people demarcate, talk about, and inhabit place are fundamentally enactive and embodied, taking into account more-than-human systems of activity and being. In the following sections, I provide a summary of the findings from my three analytical chapters. Figure 7-1 provides a graphic overview of the dissertation.
Map of Dissertation

Foundational Literature
- Enactive Cognition
  - McGann et al., 2013; Fuchs, 
  & Jager, 2009; 
  Watterson, 2006
- Embodied Cognition
  - Rowland, 2010; Thrift, 
  2004; Clark, 2008
- Post-Structural Approaches to 
  Place and Learning
  - Deleuze & Guattari, 
  1987; Ellsworth, 2003; Ingold, 
  2007, 2011

Contextual Assertions

Arboretum as Agentful Topography
in conjunction with
SITA as Place-Based Community

Community’s of Practice and Social Learning Systems
- Wenger, 2000 Modes of Belonging, 
  Engagement, imagination, align and inscribe practices

Methods and Techniques
- Ethnography: 
  Wolcott (1981)
- Emplaced Ethnography: 
  Hueter (2011)
- Sensory Ethnography: 
  Pink (2008)
- Transgressive Data: 
  St. Pierre (1997)
- Photovoice: 
  Wang & Burgess, 
  Walking Interviews
- Cartographic Mapping
- Anti-Cartographic Mapping
- Emergent coding

Analytical Chapters
- Chapter 4: Engagement
  - Thick places (Cassey, 
    2000)
  - Creative placemaking 
    and Affect (Duff, 2010)
- Chapter 5: Imagination-
  Placemaking as Creative Acts
  - Creative Cognitive Processes 
    (Eisner, 2002)
    Inscribing, editing, communication 
    discovering applied to placemaking
- Chapter 6: Aligning and 
  Inscribing Practice-
  Placemaking as Meshworks
  - Meshworking 
    (Ingold, 2007, 2011)

Level of Analysis and Overview of Techniques
- RQ1: Align and Inscribe Practices
  - Analyze and categorize SITA practices 
  - Map paths of different productions 
    across the Arboretum 
  - Layer two production maps
- RQ2: Imagination
  - Emergently code interpretive maps 
  - Use creative cognitive processes framework 
    to code collaborative activity 
  - Analyze theatrical artifacts
- RQ3: Engagement
  - Code interviews for emergent themes 
  - Analyze visitors maps 
  - Strategically sample participants to derive 
    in-depth case studies
Figure 7-1: Map of the dissertation synthesizing chapters.
Summary of Analytical Findings

**Engagement with SITA supported people’s sense of open ownership and belonging.** Chapter Four attended to SITA participants’ relationship with the Arboretum: what they did, where they went, and how they talked about the Arboretum. I investigated participants’ engagement with the Arboretum and examined how their participation in SITA as a place-based community mediated their relationships with the space. The findings from this chapter helped elucidate how the Arboretum already supported ‘thick’ places (Casey, 2001) of engagement within its boundaries. Also, the findings illustrate the meshwork of meanings imbricated by SITA. The Arboretum’s thick places were interwoven with participants’ experience with SITA, threading areas together in a constitutive and resonant expression of community belonging (Duff, 2010). From the analyses the findings were:

1) The Arboretum was an open place for ownership and belonging. Participants engaged with the Arboretum in highly affective and emergent ways. Participants viewed the Arboretum as an open public space, which supported their feelings of both ownership and belonging. The annotated maps of both long-standing (Stanley) and novice members (Liza) illustrated the range of activities and affective connections that participants had with the Arboretum. This sense of ownership and belonging was greatly enhanced by membership in the SITA community because of their creative placemaking practices. For example, the father-son case study exemplified how SITA activities provided bonding and outdoor time in the Arboretum. They then extended theater activity to other contexts, practicing memorizing lines at home.

2) SITA activities supported emergent and intimate ways of sensing and knowing the Arboretum. As the site of intense dwelling prompted by SITA activities, the Arboretum encouraged performers to sense the environment in new ways. These new ways of feeling and knowing were generally described in terms of noticing and perceiving, moving, and sense-making. Participants like Teddy and Scott discussed how their extended dwelling or “forced exposure” in the Arboretum help form a new appreciation for the outdoors. Similarly, extended dwelling caused participants like Jake to notice and perceive the natural world around them in new or more nuanced ways.
3) The Arboretum as a place of adventure and experimentation supported engagement. Participants Charlie and Elliot described having sentiments of adventure, exploration, and discovery, illustrating an initial sense of the Arboretum as a “wild” and “expansive” place. Similarly, the Arboretum as a separate space supported exploration through SITA’s activities, such as Midsummer’s inaugural staging and Malcolm and Mona’s description of the H2Oberon episode. Related to the Arboretum’s designation as an open and public place was its perceived separateness in purpose and landscape from the surrounding town and university geography.

4) The liminal or othering quality of the Arboretum supported the fourth theme of this chapter’s findings that the Arboretum was a “separate space,” mediated by SITA’s unique placemaking practices, which supported alternative ways of moving, feeling, and being.

**Imaginative synergy with the Arboretum fueled SITA’s placemaking as creative acts of representation.** Chapter Five investigated SITA’s placemaking as a series of creative acts and explored the creative, imaginative, and performative aspects of placemaking by analyzing the production of a single play. The primacy of the Shakespeare text acted as a map and a guide for exploring the Arboretum in new ways. The interpretive maps provided a wide array of visual and conceptual insights into how the performers understood their dramatic character’s motivation and relationship with the island (Arboretum). While some participants used traditional cartographic approaches (Meredith-Miranda), others took a more expressionistic approach by utilizing color and shape to great effect (Jake-Ariel). The maps not only revealed how participants tended to synthesize elements of the physical Arboretum with descriptions from the text but also provided insight into their creative process of character development.

Focusing on the Ariel ensemble and specialists such as the costume mistress provided insight into how place (Arboretum) influenced people’s creative process across various mediums. The findings showed that the basis of SITA’s placemaking praxis was a series of imaginative engagements that brought forth intentions. The representational theatrical conventions of staging, costumes, and music helped create the “world” in which a play or performance took place. Using the materials of the Arboretum to enhance
theatrical conventions was exemplified by the split tree, its discovery and use of tree branches as wings. At the same time, the Arboretum itself served as inspiration and a generative matrix to drive collaborative activity and artifact creation, like Anya’s bird-sky-inspired costumes and Colin’s water-influenced musical motifs.

The Arboretum as an agentful topography served as agent, creative medium, and tool in SITA’s placemaking. It was difficult to separate the agency of people from place and tools because the activity of people, place, and tools were bound in a dynamic system (Ingold, 2011, Swist & Kuswara, 2016). The interplay between the material and physical aspects of the Arboretum’s landscape (branches) and its effect on SITA members’ imaginative engagement (the form of a harpy monster) helped transform the Arboretum from physical-material to dynamic, creative medium (branches as harpy wings altered with fabric and movement). This interplay pushed members to think creatively within the parameters of the Arboretum (Eisner, 2002). SITA members, in concert with the Arboretum, made art through the creative cognitive processes of inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering place.

**Placemaking as meshworking provides theoretical and analytical purchase to learning and dwelling in an agentful topography.** Chapter Six used Ingold’s concept of meshwork to explicate what constitutes place, placemaking, and people’s meaning-making with place. Incorporating meshworking and creative cognitive processes together as a theoretical unit provided a lens to analyze and describe SITA’s placemaking across many productions and seventeen years. From this theoretical synthesis, I innovated three new concepts to describe SITA’s placemaking as meshworking; *making lines*, *territorializing/ deterritorializing*, and *archi-texture*.

*Making lines* is a way to describe the various ways participants inscribed the Arboretum with their meta-performance lines (storylines, wanderlines, cue lines, and lines of sight). Therefore, SITA’s placemaking forms a series of lines that are physical and conceptual as well as individual and collective. *Making lines* brings together the ideas of inscription that are physical and that embodied (Ingold, 2007) representational and creative (Eisner, 2002), as well as the concept of inscribing practices as within a
community (Wenger, 2010). SITA’s editing of space is captured by the dual process of territorializing/deterritorializing, transforming or removing of cultural subjects and objects from a certain location in space and time. Knots of meaning and feeling help constitute place’s texture, the weave and weft of place’s meaning to people. Some knots are fast—tightly bound and articulated—while others are loose—connections that are ill-defined, ephemeral or subconscious. Finally, SITA’s placemaking created structures of affect and possibilities or archi-textures that communicate how a place “feels” and informs what can be done in that space and by whom (Fairy Woods and Troll Hollow). I, like Ingold, am not interested in unraveling the knots but rather feeling their texture—the meanings they create. Through understanding the nuanced meanings that constitute place, educators and designers can leverage the pedagogical forces of archi-textures and affordances of places of learning as well as support learners’ own discovery, especially in outdoor settings.

**Discussion and Contributions**

Analyzing the SITA community’s placemaking with the Arboretum through the lenses of engagement, imaginative meaning-making, and meshworking praxis provided three conceptual refinements to theories of placemaking. First, the Arboretum and SITA offer an example of a place-based community that partners with an agentful topography. In turn, agentful topographies and the communities they support engage in learning that is collaborative, emplaced, embodied, and emergent. Next, placemaking is a non-linear, creative act of representation, mediated by human and place’s agency. Finally, placemaking as meshworking provides more than metaphor and vocabulary to the study. It became a theoretical and analytical tool to explore learning and activity that was enactive, embodied, and entangled. As a part of this contribution, I add to the study of placemaking several theoretical concepts informed by meshworking and by Eisner's creative cognitive processes. Based on these findings, I discuss their alignment and contributions to the literature.

**Agentful topographies as partners in collaborative learning.** The findings from this dissertation add to collaborative learning research by extending the field of potential collaborators to
more-than-human subjects. The concept of agentful topographies, along with the learning-with-place approach, expands the role of place to a collaborative partner — rather than simply a setting for learning. The Arboretum, together with SITA the community it supports, offers an analytical account of how people engage with place and how they are recruited by agentful topographies. Prior work on pedagogies of place view the question “who are we?” as intimately bound with “where are we?” (Sarbin, 1998; Dixon & Durheim 2000). Until my dissertation, there has been little investigation of how place can be constituted as an agentive force in place-based communities of practice or learning. By focusing on the SITA community’s engagement, imagination, and alignment of practices with the Arboretum, this project shows the enactive, embodied, and emergent ways that agentful topographies shape and are shaped by human activity.

Duff (2010) describes “thick places” of concentrated entanglement of affect, habit, and practice, which offer opportunities for personal enrichment, meaning-making and deepening of affective experience. The ability to identify thick places “requires one to remain alert to the nexus and the ways affects and practices converge in the experience of enrichment and belonging” (Duff, 2010 p. 882). Therefore, I examined how SITA members talked about the Arboretum, how and where they moved through the space, and what they did there. Focusing on young adults like Malcolm, Jake, and Mona, and youth like Elliot, I illustrate the various ways the Arboretum draws learners in and engages them during an important maturation process (for most participants, during their college years, and for Elliot, in his adolescence). The cases showed that exploring and collaborating during SITA supported members’ sense of belonging and ownership, evidenced by Malcolm’s strong feelings of ‘stewardship’ and ‘protectiveness’ of the Arboretum that he developed over nearly twenty years with SITA. Through the analysis of the interviews and of participants’ maps, I teased out at a fine level where and how such concentrated places in the Arboretum were constituted for SITA participants. Furthermore, I found that the intense and extended dwelling in the Arboretum supported the following; members’ perception and
recognition of seasonal change, intense friendships and bonding formed in and through the space, and the excitement and discovery of special spaces.

The process of making place is not just about forming attachments to created and found objects in the material world but rather understanding that people, their communities, and places shape each other reciprocally (Benson & Jackson, 2013). Ellsworth suggests that we do not usually think of public spaces, events, architecture, or performances as being explicitly pedagogical (2005). However, for SITA members and their audiences, the performance of place becomes pedagogical by creating the potential to disrupt and reconfigure people’s relationship with place and their identities.

**Placemaking as a creative activity.** Placemaking is a nonlinear, creative act of representation, mediated by human and place’s agency. Imagination was a central tenant of SITA’s placemaking as evidenced by the rich artifacts (drawn maps, costumes, music) and embodied affects (gesture, movement, vocal differentiation). Placemaking as creative acts support the concept of agentful topography as the Arboretum became the medium, tool, and agent in SITA’s creative activity. The findings in this dissertation broaden creative cognitive processes (Eisner 2002) to placemaking, which in turn supports deeper examination of placemaking’s pedagogical potential. Therefore, engaging with place in emergent and imaginative ways opens up new potentials for designing, discovering, and dwelling in places of learning.

From a community of practice lens, imagining collectively with place means having a shared trajectory and vocabulary to do things together, talk, and make artifacts. Such shared activity allows communities to experiment with what is doable and to understand how the environment is responsive to these actions (Wenger, 2010). Imaginative engagement allows people to notice the world in new ways and to engage with new possibilities. Imagination, coupled with placemaking as creative activity, augments people’s senses to feel and make meaning of our world. Like artists and scientists who perceive what is, SITA participants came to discover, to understand the Arboretum, and to imagine what could be. They then set to work using their knowledge, technical skills, and sensibilities to pursue what they had
imagined (Eisner, 2002). Therefore, the Arboretum acted as a living and agentful topography, a dynamic system that afforded new landscape-as-tools and landscape-as-medium by providing physical support to the performers’ imaginative engagement.

When place is understood as a creative medium, it helps guide the learner, who must occasionally surrender to the demands of place’s emerging or changing forms (Eisner, 2002). Furthermore, place is a dynamic, creative medium that offers its own discourse and helps set the creative trajectory. Understanding place as creative medium aligns placemaking with Eisner’s creative cognitive processes and supports place’s agency to shape social interactions as well as learning that is enactive (Thompson, 2010; McGann et al., 2013; Fuchs, & Jaegher, 2009) and embodied (Rowland, 2010; Chamber and Clark, 2008).

*The transformational force of the Arboretum through placemaking.* SITA’s creative placemaking exploration and discovery led to transformation. Placemaking as a creative act is not limited to creating new spaces; it includes new ways of being, thinking, and feeling. People construct place through their identities, histories, and stories, which shape how they sense and render places through a synthesis of both perception and imagination (Streible 1998; Basso, 2000). For example, the word *landscape* retains the generative force of the Old English word *scep*, to craft, shape, or even render poetical. “Landscares are contested, worked, and re-worked” by people depending on the social and political forces as well as the individuals’ experiences (Tilley, 2006). Therefore, places are always in the process of being and becoming. Imagination allows people to create potential worlds while simultaneously providing a “safety net” for experimentation and rehearsal before acting them out in a physical or public way (Eisner, 2002). Coupled with exploration and discovery, imagination supports transformation. Both the Arboretum and SITA were physically and socially ‘safe’ spheres in which members could act out potential worlds, personalities, and ways of being before enacting them in more public and formal ways. Participants described how together the SITA community and Arboretum helped members form new social roles and identities as well as new worlds for the Shakespeare stories.
Malcolm, along with the other founding members of SITA, transformed the Arboretum for audiences and the public by opening its potential as a performance and creative space. At the same time, Malcolm was transformed into a particular kind of performer and director as well as a steward of the place and the community he helped create. Mona described how belonging to the SITA community and forming a creative partnership with Malcolm allowed her to overcome her shyness and develop into a group leader. Jake’s playful and experimental activities aided him in taking on a new identity as a dancer. Mona and Jake also exemplify how playing more-than-human characters facilitated fluid identity play and new ways of being: Mona’s improvisation as male Oberon and Jake’s new-found ways to move and sense the world as Ariel. Agentful topographies like the Arboretum also have implications for self-discovery and identity play. Therefore, such places can act as sites of transgression and otherness as well as sites of alternate social and environmental ordering.

Adopting the processes of inscribing, editing, communicating, and discovering not only provides a framework for how people make place but also the underlying cognitive and pedagogical value of placemaking. This last finding leads me to the guiding contribution of this dissertation, translating Eisner’s vocabulary to fit spatial inquiry. I offer new theoretical concepts for placemaking and its relationship to learning that meets three key criteria: i. It supports reciprocal modes of place attachment and belonging, ii. It conceives of place as an active participant in peoples’ learning, iii. It treats placemaking as a series of creative acts.

**Creative placemaking through the vernacular of meshworking.** Part of my contribution to placemaking as a learning activity is refining a theoretical understanding of placemaking through the poststructural vernacular of meshwork. I found that SITA’s placemaking was a series of creative acts mediated by both human and place’s agency. This finding allowed me to knit two theoretical orientations together. I accomplished this by adapting the creative cognitive processes outlined by Eisner to fit the heuristic of placemaking. To synthesize the creative processes across enactive, embodied, and more-than-
human learning systems, I adopted the poststructurally-inspired language of Ingold’s meshworks (2007; 2011). I used SITA as a case study from which I enacted and adapted a set of placemaking concepts.

Table 7-1: Placemaking as meshworking: The cognitive processes of placemaking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eisner’s concepts</th>
<th>This study’s revised concept</th>
<th>New definition for the field of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inscribing</td>
<td>Making lines</td>
<td>Making lines entails an initial kind of mapping physically or conceptually. Making lines means creating regions, borders, pathways, and trails. Conceptually making lines could be linking the physical space with a story (literary, historical or otherwise).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing</td>
<td>Territorializing/ Deterritorializing</td>
<td>Transforming or removing of cultural subjects and objects from a certain location in space and time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>Dialoguing</td>
<td>Communicating about place and its plots, symbols, inhabitants, and agencies. Listening to place and its human and non-human inhabitants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovering</td>
<td>Discovering</td>
<td>Finding new ways to experience the everyday. Exploring the physical, social, and cultural features of place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The definitions of each concept are based on the findings within the context of SITA. As described earlier, conceptualizing placemaking as meshworking involves a shift from a learning in place approach, or what Ingold calls place-bound inquiry— to one that takes a learning with place or place-binding approach (Ingold, 2011). I expand upon each definition in the following section.
**Making lines.** Within my placemaking as meshworking processes, the act of inscription becomes making lines, either physically or conceptually. For SITA, making physical lines entailed creating regions, borders, pathways, and trails while conceptual lines were often linked with stories and the Shakespeare text. Other lines of meaning coiled around somatic connections and observations within the living environment (Rich and Elliot’s observation of deer and hawks) and bonds of friendship made during SITA’s activities (Malcolm and Mona, Teddy and Scott). Making lines as a theoretical contribution to placemaking supports ideas of inscription that are both physical and conceptual, individual, and communal. Making lines attends to the detailed personal lines that are imbricated over time (illustrated by Stanley’s map). It also applies to SITA’s meta-performance lines that connect and tangle the Heathdale and East Valley during the consecutive productions of *Midsummer* and *The Tempest*. Consequently, making lines, and in my case making SITA’s lines visible, is not about discovering completely new worlds but rather “laying a new set of lines down on a known but changing world” to navigate and understand it. (Hall, 2004 p. 15). Making lines as a theoretical aspect of place underscores the creative and multi-faceted ways that people navigate, describe, and affectively map the places in which they dwell.

**Territorializing/deterritorializing.** Editing place becomes the processes of territorializing/deterritorializing, the transformation or removal of cultural subjects and objects from a certain location in space and time. I chose to adopt Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the dual processes of territorializing/deterritorializing as the placemaking equivalent to Eisner’s representational *editing*. Defined as the creation and perpetuation of cultural space, the dissolution of that space, and its subsequent recreation, territorializing/deterritorializing emphasizes the cultural as well as the geographic regions and relations that make up place. These concepts also serve as “alternatives to coded behavior” and help describe the movement of a wayfaring subject through an agentful topography (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1987).

Malcolm described an example of territorializing when he relates how the first production of *Midsummer* changed peoples’ attitudes towards the Arboretum because no one had thought about it as
performance space. Therefore, territorializing/ deterritorializing illuminates how education practices, especially in terms of spatial and environmental arrangements and activities, can be coded. Places can be both affirming and detrimental to learners, depending on learners’ agency, access, and historical connection with place. Consequently, territorializing/ deterritorializing provide insights that push past such notions as best practices or most efficient use of space but rather ask, what are the best practices for whom, when, and especially in my case, where?

**Dialoguing.** The idea of dialoguing with place emphasizes communicating and sharing information about plots, names, symbols, inhabitants, and agencies through performance. Communicating and sharing in SITA’s case is also connected with building up and leaving traces of archi-texture—structures of feeling and texture. While Eisner uses the term communicating, I felt that it was necessary to emphasize listening to place and its human and nonhuman inhabitants. To capture both listening and telling aspects of communicating place, I use the concept of dialoguing since it brings the force of place-identity and place attachment literature (Hunter, 2012; Streible, 1998; Orr, 1992). Examples of dialoguing include participants nicknaming and describing the Arboretum in their own terms and how SITA members addressed the Arboretum by thanking it directly when they discovered the split tree. Dialoguing also resonates with an enactive approach; organisms actively participate in the generation of meaning that arises from a “dialogue between the sense-making activity of an agent and the responses from its environment” (Fuchs & de Jaegher, 2009, p. 470). The way that people communicate or engage in dialogue with and about place needs to support learning that fosters connectedness with the more-than-human material world and allows place to have its turn in the conversation.

**Discovering.** Discovering is finding new physical features or new ways to experience the everyday. The process of discovery is also highly affective and often gratifying. The interviews revealed that participants both sought and found ownership and belonging through exploration and discovery with the Arboretum. The perceived qualities of the Arboretum as a “separate” and “wild” space offered opportunities for its visitors to “get lost” enough to extricate themselves through a combination of
wayfinding, discovery, and luck. The act of creating “new” spaces for each production and then sharing these novel spaces with audiences allowed for the larger community to co-discover the Arboretum as the SITA members create it. At the same time, discovery is not the end stage of the creative process but happens throughout—congruent with the other three processes. Discovery underscored the new ways of perceiving the environment and developing an affinity for nature (Teddy and Scott) and for movement and embodied skills (e.g., Jake’s inspiration to use breakdancing moves to enhance his Ariel performance).

Discovering also speaks to the transformational force of the Arboretum discussed earlier. “Out of one territory, one map can bloom a thousand geographies” (Hall, 2004, p. 17). Thus, the Arboretum and its representational signifier, the visitor's map, demonstrate how one territory (the Arboretum) engendered and supported many different relationships and their associated meanings and affects. The Arboretum and SITA together constitute physical, social, and artistic/creative spheres in which to act out new skills, personalities, and ways of being, before acting them out in larger, more public spheres.

SITA provides one case of how amateur performers used their unique relationship with a living, dynamic space and its material/environmental quality to guide their creative process. However, this study opens up the possibilities to explore how other places shape communities’ creative and cultural output. I put forth the creative processes of placemaking to provide a flexible road map for carrying out other such inquiries. The contribution of creative cognitive processes via the vernacular of meshworks adds to the study of placemaking by attending to the more-than-human resources and agency of place (Marin & Bang, 2018). It also broadens the scope of creative representation and arts-based practices into spheres of human and environmental activity that are not often considered. Furthermore, the placemaking as meshworking orientation contributes to the consideration of the socio-material qualities of collaborative learning environments—systems with more-than-human collaborators.
Placemaking as Meshworking Reifies Theory

Ingold’s concepts of meshworks have been used in education including teacher education and research on learning spaces such as museums (Kelton, Ma, Rawlings, Rhodehamel, Saraniero, Nemirovsky, 2018; Nolte, 2014) to describe dynamic, open-ended and collaborative sense-making that is spatial and temporally bound. Hollett (2015) uses the concept of meshwork to show how youths created place through their own interconnected interests. Building on these previous studies, I used meshwork in a representational and cartographic way that operationalizes meshwork in educational settings in ways that have not been previously attempted. My dissertation applies meshwork longitudinally to an entire community. Using meshwork on a larger scale than previously attempted also required a personal and in-depth knowledge of the learning space, community, and practices.

Through placemaking as meshworking, I could better understand and describe how the Arboretum is an active participant in the SITA community’s learning. I intentionally adopted a relational approach to place. Such an approach translated into exploring and accounting for different ways to practice emplacement with the research context and more-than-human participants. Therefore, placemaking as meshworking served as a unifying metaphor and analytical tool for enactive, embodied, and more-than-human activity. Because the Arboretum was a multiplicity—artistic medium, co-agent, and creative tool—the decentralized meshwork is an apt concept to analyze the complex web of meaning and activity that SITA participants created with the Arboretum.

More than a metaphor. Despite its increasing use in educational research, meshwork has remained a helpful, if not somewhat complicated, metaphor. Prior to my work, a lack of empirical examples and overly dense theoretical framing has kept meshworking outside the purview of designers, educators, and practitioners, where otherwise it could be the most impactful. Through example and definition, I make meshworking a more accessible concept by providing an empirical application through the mapping of SITA’s meta-performance lines as examples of modes of meaning, the storyline (narrative), wanderline (embodiment) cue lines (linguistic), and lines of sight (observation and
Meshworking as an analytical tool allowed me to attend to multiple actions, data sources, and movements (of both human and more-than-human bodies/materials) at the same time. I focused on these elements because they were integral to SITA’s dramatic performance, but the “lines” that create the meshwork of digital or hybrid spaces, for example, would, of course, look quite different. Meshworks’ power is that it accounts for the messy, unresolved, dynamic, and affective aspects of learning systems that are difficult to capture with traditional methods.

Meshworking, like networking, attempts to draw elements together. But unlike networking, meshworking accounts for fluidity and mutation of structures across time, space, and agents (Sørenson, 2009). As more spaces become hybridized through digital and physical spaces, and learners have a greater degree of mobility, meshworking can be a powerful theoretical and analytical tool to take into account such dynamics. Placemaking as meshworking is also a powerful concept for designers of learning systems and learning environments to account for and utilize emergent affordances, affects, and mobilities of learning spaces. Using meshworking as an analytical tool shifts the language around the design of places of learning from outcome-oriented heuristics such as what do people do in the space? to how do people move and feel in the space? Here, I specifically make a case for the design of learning spaces, but the argument extends to other types of learning design.

**Sensory ethnographic methods enabled the examination of texture and archi-texture.** I found that SITA was a place-based community that produced structures that were *archi-textural*—rather than structural—in nature. Texture is how something feels, and therefore, texture is linked with affect. A place’s affect takes into account the somatic engagements and interplay of touch, smell, sight, and sounds. While texture tends to be associated with touch and tactile qualities, texture is almost always rooted in some other kind of haptic sphere (Sedgewick, 2003; Bora, 1997). For instance, to describe the texture of the Arboretum, one hears the *crunch* of gravel, the damp *smell* of leaves, or the *pull* of suction as the mud squishes out from under a boot. Using techniques informed by sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009) allowed
me to fully draw upon place’s resources of smells, sounds, and touch to describe the Arboretum’s ability to inspire, challenge, or move SITA’s activities along.

Texture’s affect can encompass emotional and historical qualities as well. A place’s texture can offer information about how socially, historically, and materially it came to be. Perceiving something texturally is to ask questions like *how did it get that way? And what could I do with it?* (Bora, 1997, Sedgewick, 2003) The ability to glean such information from place is often predicated on its structures and the material traces left behind—the cement remnants of a foundation, for example, or the mismatched brick of a walled-off window. SITA, however, did not construct physical structures but rather relied on storytelling and somatic engagement. Materially, the most visible traces of SITA’s placemaking were the fairy houses of Troll Hollow. Yet, these were ephemeral, lasting perhaps a day before they were disassembled or tumbled down. While there was not a strong material record of SITA’s activities on the Arboretum, the community’s affective traces as evidenced by examples like the university administrator’s new perception of the Heathdale are just as important and powerful.

Without using the techniques and perspectives of sensory ethnography, it would have been very difficult indeed to understand how SITA’s placemaking came to be and even more difficult to answer, “what do people do with it?” The Arboretum shaped and was shaped by SITA’s praxis. Therefore, SITA drew from and added to the Arboretum’s texture—how the Arboretum feels. By leveraging the smells, sounds, and many surfaces of the Arboretum, SITA invited audiences to experience the space and “feel” the Arboretum in novel ways that were both visceral and conceptual. SITA went beyond making the places described in the Shakespeare text visible. The deeper, more fundamental goal was to communicate something about place’s potential and about the possibilities they present. SITA’s archi-textures, like the domestic atmospheres that Pink and Mackley explore, “are not as such *products* (original italics) but they are *produced* or emergent ongoingly as people improvise their ways through the world” (2016, p.176).

The arts-based theatrical context of the study demanded analytical attention to affects and intensities, what performers described as their own energy on stage or from the audiences. Despite saying
the same lines and moving through the same blocking SITA performers often described performances and audiences as being “high energy” or “flat.” Consequently, techniques that emphasized sensory and transgressive data (St. Pierre, 1997) aligned with the attitudes, imaginative engagement, and activities of theatrical performers in general. Furthermore, conceptualizing SITA and the Arboretum as a more-than-human system required using nontraditional methods of collecting and analyzing data. Therefore, my dissertation illustrates how researchers can find novel ways of understanding elusive data like individuals’ imaginative engagement (interpretive maps) and embodied experiences. Using sensory data in concert with more traditional data like interviews and observations helps elucidate the lived and lively-imagined experiences of people as they learn, work, and play together.

**Implications for educational learning spaces and environments**

This dissertation combats the notion that learning is place-agnostic. All the findings from this study provide instances of a learning-with-place perspective. The implications of my dissertation are as follows. 1) This study provides an analytical case to help universities recognize spaces that support learning and dwelling. 2) My placemaking concepts inform placemaking in digital, hybrid, and physical spaces. 3) Poststructural orientations and theories can help us to build theory and develop methods in Learning Sciences research.

**Universities spaces that support learning and dwelling.** This project provides an analytical case to help universities recognize, utilize, and create open, public spaces. The Arboretum and the SITA community it supported are examples of how university spaces can open their pedagogical address (Ellsworth, 2005) to diverse stakeholders. One way to accomplish this goal is by utilizing and investing in learning places that act as dwelling spaces to which people can return to, all the while creating new and diverse meanings across extended periods. Thus, learning-with-place evokes a plural notion of university spaces as being comprised of constellations or bundles (Massey, 2005) of dynamic and multiple, culturally derived meanings.
The dwelling and the activity that the Arboretum supported makes it a place of *querencia* for participants—a place of belonging, familiarity, safety, and creative power. On closer examination, the placemaking activities of SITA members were not that different from those exemplified by early childhood placemaking (Goodenough, 2003; Sobel, 1990). Members described activities as providing a sense of safety, ownership, creativity, and agency. As shown by observing the SITA community, the creative placemaking impulses of children continue into and through adulthood (Goodenough, 2003). The Arboretum became and continued to be a place of *querencia* for many of the SITA participants. Sharing placemaking activities across generations, as evidenced by the father-son case of Rich and Elliot, illustrated the unique benefits of engaging in ecological and collaboratives activities. Placemaking as a creative and transformative practice can be used, as Whisart argued, to extend the university and allow learner agency in the design and use of campus spaces (1971). This dissertation provides a much-needed case of an authentic, learning-centered placemaking approach to understand how people discover, create, and share places in which they both learn and dwell.

Despite the variety of learning space models, Ellis and Goodyear (2016) call for approaches that bridge the “deep fracture” (p. 149) between conceptualizations of university learning spaces. Adopting the language of meshworking and operationalizing it, as I have done has implications for bridging the gaps in how learning spaces are constituted, the agencies of university and community stakeholders that use and manage them, and the agency and pedagogical force of the places themselves. Informing learning spaces brings me to the second implication of the dissertation, how universities can recognize, utilize, and create open and public spaces for people to learn and dwell.

**Implications for other forms of creative placemaking.** The creative cognitive processes of placemaking and the concept of agentful topographies extend discussions of how tool-use and social practices bridge physical and virtual spaces. These concepts can, in turn, elucidate other immersive environments’ creative and emergent potentials. While I developed these creative placemaking concepts in an analog context, I welcome their application and adaptation across digital or technology-enhanced
topographies. Therefore, I suggest that contexts like interactive fiction, (Liao, 2017) connected and educational gaming (Denham, & Guyotte, 2018), and collaborative learning through augmented or virtual reality (Qabshoqa, 2018) could benefit from the theoretical and analytical work presented here. Similarly, my contributions also extend to understanding the learning and design of complex learning and taskscapes such as museums, libraries, and computer labs (Ellis & Goodyear, 2016, Hung & Stables, 2011).

Agentful topographies can help us think critically about pedagogical places (both virtual and physical) that educators can co-create along with communities. Redefining the agency of place elucidates how learning and practice communities form around and are shaped by place, thus informing how learning spaces might be constituted. Returning to Mulcahy, Cleveland & Aberton’s (2015) framework of what constitutes learning spaces, agentful topographies expand what is considered as shared discourse, shared design dynamic or material, and social models. By adopting the meshwork orientation, SITA and the Arboretum together show that elements of embodiment and movement can be included as a kind of discourse, and imaginative engagement as part of a design dynamic. Finally, place both forms and is formed by shared social models.

**Using poststructural orientations in Learning Science research.** Traditionally researchers choose the theoretical lens for their study. In my case, the study chose its own theory. During an early brainstorming session about the study with Karen, we discussed the implications and goals of studying SITA. We talked about the scale and challenges that would accompany researching the process of putting together the show. Karen explained, “Well, the way I work with the double casting and the Arb itself, nothing is ever quite settled. That’s my method, it might drive people crazy, but there it is.” It was only later that “not settled” resonated as I read Sørenson’s work on the materiality of learning. The theories and frameworks available did not seem to fit the “unsettled nature” of the learning and activity she witnessed. Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts were created to understand and describe instances where things are never quite settled. However, it was not only the emergent quality of live theater but the
Arboretum itself, which demanded such concepts. The Arboretum is also never settled. It is always growing, not in a teleological way, but it is in a constant state of emergence and becoming.

My approach attempts to decenter human action and thought as the only subjects and agents within the study (St. Pierre, 2017). The outcome of research undertaken in this way is antithetical to traditional social science's practice-based language—such as framework, design, or model (St. Pierre, 2016). Rather, by taking a Deleuzian poststructural approach, I offer refined concepts. A concept is not a word but a way of thinking (Colebrook, 2001)—a line of thought with its own vocabularies and metaphors to experiment with. Practicing social science research in this way is described as empirical transcendentalism which looks and feels more like philosophy (St. Pierre, 2017). Unlike most social science research that begins with a question to answer or problem to solve, this study began in the middle (Deleuze, 1988). I started with a particular and anomalous place—a university’s arboretum and a singular learning community (SITA). I tried to understand what was happening—what were the people, texts, and trees doing together.

Practicing social science research differently. To more fully develop a learning-with-place perspective, we must describe learning and making practices as patterns of relations of humans and more-than-human elements. Questions of belonging, imagination, and collaboration with more-than-human partners lay outside traditional forms of educational research. The uses of poststructural orientations in education research are inhibited by a tension between its emancipatory and empowering potential and, seemingly confounding theoretical terms which threaten to alienate practitioners (Hodgson & Standish, 2009). The Learning Sciences has opened up the potential for examining unorthodox forms of learning—those outside of classrooms and traditional school-age learners. However, as a field, the Learning Sciences are still bound by traditional social science orthodoxy of methods and research forms. Furthermore, Learning Science research is still carried out in the humanist tradition. Taking a poststructural approach in the Learning Sciences or education research in general shifts the focus from discovery to creation. While traditional education research attempts to explain how and what people
should learn, poststructural research asks how might we learn—how things turn from all the possibilities available into practice and action. Hence, poststructural approaches focus on imagination, affect, and performativity. But it is hard to validate what “might be.” Once the thing is completed and observed, poststructuralism tends to moves on, yet this is usually the place where social science research begins. Social science is traditionally thought of as a quest of discovery, solving problems with specific answers, formulating best practices, distilling design principles, etc. Of course, these are tremendously useful. But poststructuralism does not do these things, and to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare, therein lies the rub.

**Experiencing tensions across methods and analyses.** The way I experienced and conducted poststructural research felt less like social science research and more like cooking with a grandmother. For example, a researcher’s methods are formulated like a recipe. The instructions of how the sausage is made—how the research got done. A robust methodology (recipe) needs to be valid (tasty), reliable (reproduced effectively), and trustworthy (from the source—usually an elderly person). But anyone who has ever tried to get their grandmother’s “recipe” for some cherished family dish, often encounters the following: practice-based and embodied forms of knowing and doing, subjective or contextual nuance, and unreliable sources of knowledge.

First, conventional methods of measuring and general accounting are set aside in favor of practice-based and embodied ways of knowing and doing (Sfard, 1998). “*How much salt? - A pinch, -How much is a pinch?*” The answer is of course, there no set amount of salt. It is based on the relational forces of the other ingredients, personal preference, and sometimes what is on-hand. Researchers like Pink (2013) and St. Pierre’s work (1997) gives voice to the qualitative researcher’s equivalent to this tension. The convention of research forms and methods (coding, triangulation, field notes) can stifle the potential of scholarly inquiry to challenge non-normative forms of knowing and learning (Hollett & Dudek, 2019). St. Pierre argues that coding non-representational data is an impossible task within interpretive social science (2015). Coding halts motion and tethers what is animated. For example, Sørenson describes the
“minimal methodology” in which she began her work attempting to “know as, little as possible in advance” and allowing for definitions of concepts and practices to emerge as results, not beginnings.

Next, the practiced, situated, or emplaced understanding of grandma’s cooking is created and data analyzed in response to feeling, texture, and taste, rather than exact temperatures, minutes, or other conventional techniques. Furthermore, knowledge is contextually situated and imparted through doing. Close observation, feeling and sensory cues become the flows, affects, and intensities. Thus, poststructural methods are also phenomenological and embodied in nature. This exchange illustrates two points important to the poststructural researcher. First, embodied participation is essential for understanding. Understanding derives from participating with other people and other things. And a more-than-human approach attends to how components (people and things) take part in practice. Second, it is the centrality of performance/performativity that is the object of study. One does not study participants but the participation of people with things. Performance denotes not a single action with a beginning or end, but what is achieved through interrelating parts or what Deleuze would describe as the assemblage. (Sørenson, 2009; Verran; 1998; Deleuze, 1987).

Poststructuralism views knowledge as fragmented and contradictory (Youdell, 2006), leaving many questions unresolved and unsolvable. Sometimes the sources themselves are not reliable witnesses to their own narrative, knowledge, or practice (Sørenson, 2009). In my cooking example, it is not remembered whether the recipe calls for sour cream or yogurt. The distinction is further rendered moot when it is discovered that the fridge only contains cottage cheese. Perhaps the substitution, the improvisation of yogurt for cottage cheese (or sour-cream?) will provide a significant new thing, it might be horrible and never be attempted again. Or the substitution will work—thus increasing your knowledge and the versatility of the recipe. Perhaps your pioneering resourcefulness speaks more to the spirit of how the dish came to be in the first place.

While the goal of the endeavor was to chronicle and then methodically reproduce said dish, the activity turned, as it inevitably does, into something else. You did not cook in silence; there was
conversation and gossip, tea was drunk. Thus, the improvised orchestration of cooking was completed within the context of the Deleuze-Guatarrian *and..and..and* the creation of an assemblage in which individual performances maintain their integrity but when brought together make something new (1987). These are the conditions that poststructural methods are equipped to handle. Time and again throughout SITA’s placemaking, I encountered data that I was not sure how to handle or even described. Thus, I took a wayfaring approach, through different fields and areas of study to gather up theories and techniques that were both interesting and useful.

**Playing at string games with theories and methods.** My dissertation is an example of how taking a poststructural approach shifts the way one conducts and discusses research. Such a shift is more attentive to affect, embodiment, and the ways that place is “practiced”—socio-culturally constructed and physically experienced. Through an emplaced ethnographic approach, I have attempted to faithfully convey the sights, sounds, and feelings, that I experienced as an emic ethnographer, community participant, and a performing pedagogue. My methodology and analyses emerged from overlapping lenses of emplacement, interacting with my participants (both human and non-human) and living, moving, and imagining with my data (St. Pierre, 2015; St. Pierre, Jackson & Mazzei, 2016; Hollett & Dudek, 2019). What this study accomplished was to reify philosophical concepts and use them to examine authentic practice and learning in real time. Poststructuralism allowed me to describe the push and pull of place, bodies, and the activity they created together. Thus, this study tacks back and forth between strings of theories that are concerned with enactive, embodied, and the more-than-human. Like the string-hand games of cat’s cradle, pinch here, twist, let slip there—each configuration is an experiment to think about and experience placemaking and learning differently.

Playing at string games, in the poststructural sense, allowed me to reify and explore Ingold’s concept of meshwork (2009; 2011), this study’s main contribution to the topic of placemaking and place-based learning. I adopted this concept to describe how the SITA community dwells in, learns, and builds a sense of belonging with place (the Arboratum). If place is conceived as a knot tied from multiple and
interlaced strands (meshwork), then SITA’s placemaking (meshworking) with the Arboretum was the activity of loosening some threads and entangling others.
Epilogue

I would be remiss in writing a dissertation about Shakespeare, albeit peripherally, without examining what the Bard himself had to say on the subject of learning-with-place. In *As You Like It*, set in the forest of Avon, the exiled Duke explains to his small court the benefits of being sent into the woods.

**DUKE**

-And this our life, exempt from public haunt,

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,

Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

I would not change it-

*As You Like It* (II.i.1–17)

In this quote, Shakespeare explains how place facilitates the more-than-human systems of learning, knowledge, and values. In a few short lines, Shakespeare invokes the knowledge of the institutions of society, university, and the church. Trees have language, water tells stories, and stones reveal solid moralizing. Thus, to mix dramas, placemaking allows us to create "brave new worlds” which reveal knowledge and show us at the very least what is useful— if not good— in our immediate environments. I began this dissertation with the concept of dwelling, both physically and mentally—being drawn back, returning to places that are thick with memories and other potentials. I provided examples of how various people have made the Arboretum a place of *querencia* and how it functions as a separate place within the university-city. Dwelling, along with mapping, arose as meta-themes across the data and analytical techniques. Consequently, I ended my analytical chapters by examining “fairy houses,” the tiny dwelling structures made by children and other visitors. My last artifact, (Figure 8-1) Ramona-Ariel's drawn interpretive map, brings all these themes together.
Ramona depicted the split tree along with the song/cue line, "where the bee sucks, there suck I", a song about freedom and the release of Ariel. However, Ramona’s map depicts a kind of rootedness of Ariel to the tree, or Arb, or island by inscribing the word “HOME.” I offer this representation of place, a synergy of real and imagined, as a final string game between making homes and dwellings in new worlds while at the same time making one’s place in the world and supporting others to do the same.


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