Shakespeare and Folk[1]

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> 'Sumer is icumen in' is the real motto of the English people.[2]
> (Cecil Sharp)

> So the folklorist is rather like a man staring at a scene in a mirror who must be aware, to fully understand that scene, that his own reflection is a major part of what he is looking at.[3]
> (Bob Pegg)

> What the fuck do you think an English forest is for?[4]
> (Jez Butterworth)

Introduction: Integrating Shakespeare and Folk

In particular ways, times and places, people have integrated Shakespeare with the constructions, identities, and cultures of folk music. Understanding what people have made Shakespeare and folk mean, together and apart, can help us see why integrating them matters. This chapter tries to do this, exploring how a range of these integrations have happened, and focussing on two in detail: a 1914 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a 2013 staging of *As You like It*.

Before doing so, one example will convey some of the intensity, and significance, of the relationship between Shakespeare and folk. In *As You Like It* 4.2, the Lords, '[*dressed as*] foresters', sing a song:

[1] Many thanks to Jon Boden, Vic Gammon, John Jones, Matt Unthank, Jim Mageean, Fay Garratt, Monika Smialkowska, and Hilary Thornton for conversations and insights about folk and Shakespeare. This chapter was made possible because the Society for Theatre Research awarded me funds which supported time spent at the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives in Stratford-upon-Avon, and I am very grateful to both the Society and the Centre accordingly.

[2] Cecil Sharp, letter to Percy MacKaye regarding Mackaye's 1916 *Masque of Caliban* in New York Stadium; cited in Maud Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp: His Life and Work* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 133.

[3] Bob Pegg, *Rites and Riots: Folk Customs of Britain and Europe* (Blandford Press: Poole, 1981), 18.

[4] Jez Butterworth, *Jerusalem* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2013), 122.

What shall he have that killed the deer?

[…]

Take thou no scorn to wear the horn.

It was a crest e'er thou wast born.

Thy father's father wore it,

And thy father bore it.[5]

(4.2.10; 14–17)

Ross W. Duffin notes early modern renderings of the song, but does not mention that versions of these lyrics appear in a famous folk song called 'Hal-an-Tow'.[6] 'Hal-an-Tow' features the refrain 'Summer is a-coming in', which echoes the medieval round known as 'Sumer is icumen in', to which Cecil Sharp attached such national significance in my first epigraph. 'Hal-an-Tow' was revived in part by folk luminaries such as The Watersons on their 1965 album *Frost and Fire: A Calendar of Ritual and Magical Songs*. This version inspired The Oyster Band on 1986's *Step Outside*, though John Jones, the band's singer, confesses 'I had no idea Shakespeare used these lines'.[7] We might compare 'Hal-an-Tow' to a song like 'Bold John Riley' (also performed by The Oyster Band), which has lines in it echoing Feste's song at the end of *Twelfth Night*, and which Shakespeare himself echoes in *King Lear* 3.2: 'For the rain it raineth every day'. Kate Rusby's version on her 1997 *Hourglass* album modernises the language ('the rain it rains all day long'), but The Teacups' rendering on *One for the Pot* (2013) keeps the lines 'Shakespearean'. Jim Mageean, the singer who taught the song to all these artists, admits: 'As far as I know A. L. Lloyd found the song in the 1950's… He never noticed the Shakespeare connection though'.[8]

Connections between Shakespeare and 'Hal-an-Tow' thread through other aspects of English folk culture. Rob Young recounts the tale of husband and wife duo Toni and Dave Arthur, who were 'established figures on the traditional folk circuit' in the 1960s and 70s.[9]

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[6] Ross W. Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook* (London and New York: Norton, 2004), 28–9; see also David Lindley's discussion of the song in *Shakespeare and Music* (London: Arden, 2006), 188–90. For more on the song, see the online discussion thread at The Mudcat Café: https://mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=3527&threadid=3527#17754 (accessed 23 April 2019).

[7] John Jones, email communication with Adam Hansen (28 April 2019).

[8] Jim Mageean, email communication with Adam Hansen (17 April 2019).

[9] Rob Young, *Electric Eden: Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 438–42.

When researching 'English folk-song origins', Dave Arthur contacted Alex Sanders, recently 'nominated […] King of the Witches', to look at his copy of the *Book of Shadows*, 'a workbook of spells, incantations and ritual instructions'. Arthur recollects:

> I started going through it, and there's all these bits and snippets of rhymes and things, and one of them appears in the horn dance: 'Take thou no scorn to wear the horn / It was a crest ere thou wast born / Thy father's father wore it / And thy father bore it.' And of course, that came from a Shakespeare play, someone had found that and said, 'Oh, that sounds authentic,' so they dropped that into it.[10]

If an aspect of folk culture derives from one of Shakespeare's plays, it must be authentic: Shakespeare is thus assumed to underwrite a construction of folk culture, however mistaken that assumption might be. As the folk musician Jon Boden argues: 'there is this misconception that folk music is contemporaneous with Shakespeare, when in fact folk music in the way that we know it now is much more a nineteenth- and indeed twentieth-century art form than a sixteenth-seventeenth-century art form'.[11]

As these examples suggest, it would be vainglorious to try and catalogue all references to Shakespeare in folk songs, or the provenance of such songs, or all the echoes of folk song in Shakespearean texts or productions.[12] Perhaps this is why so little has been written on this topic.[13] But if we instead explore what is at stake when people integrate Shakespeare and folk, as this chapter tries to do, we might generate new and more useful insights, not least about a crucial element in this integration: Englishness. Given Shakespeare's complex place in the cultural and political life of the isles of Britain (and many other places besides), this is not to say all folk is English (clearly), or that only relations between Shakespeare and English folk are worth thinking about. The parodic brilliance of Adam McNaughtan's 1984 'Oor Hamlet' shows the folly of that position.[14] Equally, as

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[10] Cited in Young, *Electric Eden*, 442.
[11] Jon Boden, interview with Adam Hansen (2 April 2019).
[12] Duffin does something of the latter; but for a critique of this approach from the perspective of a scholar with one foot firmly in folk music culture, see Vic Gammon, 'Review: Shakespeare's Songbook', *Folk Music Journal* 9/4 (2009): 658–60.
[13] Notable exceptions include Douglas Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 2002), 69; Julie Sanders, *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 189–90; and Adam Hansen, *Shakespeare and Popular Music* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), 135–8.
[14] Adam McNaughtan, 'Oor Hamlet', *The Words That I Used to Know* (Greentrax, 2000).

William H. Grattan Flood noted in 1905, there are 'some convincing arguments in favour of Shakespeare's knowledge of Irish minstrelsy'.[15]

But, mindful of 'Hal-an-Tow', we might well begin by asking: whose song is this? Folk's, or Shakespeare's? Whose 'version' commands authority? Or as Boden put it in a note to his 2014 version of Feste's closing song (titled 'Rain it Rains') for his 'A Folk Song a Day' project: 'if Shakespeare borrowed from the oral tradition why shouldn't we borrow it back again?'[16] Is a song like 'Hal-an-Tow' borrowing Shakespeare, or is Shakespeare echoing a pre-existing song, so old it would now qualify for some as 'folk' simply by virtue of its antiquity? If the latter, are these words from Shakespeare actually Shakespeare? And what does a song's (or songs') and a writer's ascribed association with a model of an English pastoral landscape, pastness, and national identity mean? Addressing these questions (dis)locates us amidst a terrain of versions of versions, interpretations of 'infinite interpretations', sharings, elisions, alternate takes, additions, intertexts, edits, and transpositions across periods and between performers.[17] For every purist intent on establishing the most authoritative or authentic setting, there is an innovator, hybridizing arrangements and meanings, or a scholar creating and disseminating 'mediated' forms.[18] This, of course, is as true of Shakespeare as it is of folk.

Yet when we talk about 'folk' music, what do we mean? In his compendious *Folk Song in England*, Steve Roud deliberately focusses on the cultures and forms of folk music before (roughly) 1950; that is, preceding (another) wave of revival inaugurated at the end of that decade. But he still has things to say about what folk has come to mean more recently:

> the parameters of the word 'folk' have been broadened so frequently, and so wantonly, as a result of the post-war Revival and music-industry involvement, as to include materials and styles which were very different, or even sometimes effectively opposite, to what had previously been included, that the word has lost any useful meaning.[19]

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[15] William H. Grattan Flood, *A History of Irish Music* (1905), chapter 17: https://www.libraryireland.com/IrishMusic/XVII.php (accessed 23 April 2019).
[16] Jon Boden, 'Rain it Rains' (2014): http://www.afolksongaday.com/?p=146 (accessed 21 May 2019).
[17] Edward Thomas, *The Heart of England* (London: J. M. Dent, 1909; London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 198.
[18] Dave Harker, *Fakesong: the Manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985), xiii.
[19] Steve Roud, *Folksong in England* (London: Faber and Faber, 2017), 17. Italics in original.

Folk exhibits, notes Roud, an 'elastic definition'.[20] Others validate this description of how things are, and resist prescription about how they should be. 'Nowadays', notes Rob Young, 'folk' is 'as much a signifier of texture and aesthetics as an indicator of ingrained authenticity'; the contemporary examples discussed later in this chapter attest to this.[21] It would seem that when it comes to defining folk, perspective is all:

> [F]olk music is an illusion created unconsciously by the people who talk about it, go out looking for it […] write books about it, and announce to an audience that they are going to sing or play it. It is rather like a mirage which changes according to the social and cultural standpoint of whoever is looking at it.[22]

Yet not everyone finds this relativism and elasticity to their liking. One of England's finest folk singers, Shirley Collins, says: 'It grieves and angers me that nowadays the term *folk music* has come to mean anything'.[23] This (relatively) purist approach reaches back to Cecil Sharp, petitioning his readers to 'deplore the ambiguity […] associated' with (to him, at that time) the relatively new coinage, derived from a 'German expression', of 'folk-song'.[24] Inspired by the likes of Sharp, others have sought to be definitive.[25]

Such debates remind us that '"Folk" in Britain has always been contested territory'.[26] This is in part because the communities and cultures making up the territories of 'Britain' – and England – are themselves contested and conflicted. This means that the problem with defining folk music is that doing so often requires defining the folk making that music. Such definitions – of the 'folk', and the music made by them – can be as reactionary, exclusive and discriminatory as they are inclusive and emancipatory. Dave Harker argued that state, elite or bourgeois 'support for "folk" culture', including music, comes from a '*need to deny the*

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[20] *Ibid.*, 17.
[21] Young, *Electric Eden*, 8.
[22] Bob Pegg, *Folk: A Portrait of English Traditional Music, Musicians and Customs* (London: Wildwood House, 1976), 120.
[23] Shirley Collins, *All in the Downs: Reflections on Life, Landscape and Song* (London: Strange Attractor, 2018), 165.
[24] Cecil Sharp, *English Folk Song, Some Conclusions* (London: Simpkin and Company, 1907), 2.
[25] See The International Folk Music Council, São Paolo (August 1954), 'Resolutions: Definition of Folk Music', *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 7 (1955): 23.
[26] Young, *Electric Eden*, 7.

primacy of class' through trying to 'reinforce *nationalism*': 'nationalism, with its "folk" components, has to be understood as part of the world's ruling classes' armoury'.[27] Yet the politics of English folk past and present are varied – there has been and is a vital progressive wing, stretching from Mary Neal's 'socialist vision of practical equality and improved living conditions', to encompass the likes of Pete Seeger, Alan Lomax, A.L. Lloyd, Ewan MacColl, and Billy Bragg.[28] So while 'folk sentiment' can be derided as 'the preserve of neo-fascists', to deny 'folk sentiment' is also to deny 'a common history and heritage' of 'popular opposition and resistance to rising inequality'.[29]

The reality is, of course, that folk music, in its long history and current state, wherever it is located, is an internationalist and localised 'mixture', like any cultural form.[30] This means we must critique the misconception that folk music 'somehow sprang up spontaneously from the soil of England': 'even a cursory search for the songs' origins leads through a bewildering tangle of sources and influences extending much further afield than the confines of the British Isles'.[31] Perceived like this, folk can offer 'a more dangerous, radical and transgressive identity' for Englishness, and any national identity, than 'received tradition' might license.[32]

Mindful of these histories, this chapter illustrates how integrating Shakespeare and folk amplifies the perceived 'Englishness' of both, sometimes in toxic ways: they are locked together, to evoke a preindustrial, atavistic, and nativist 'Deep England', 'somewhere south in the fields'.[33] But this is not a stable or simple integration because of 'the nebulous position of

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[27] Harker, *Fakesong*, xi–xii. Italics in original.
[28] Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Leeds: No Masters Co-Operative, 2012), 81. For impassioned coverage of Neal, and other formative female figures in the first folk revival, see Collins, *All in the Downs*, 173–9; on Lloyd's politics and connections with MacColl, see Harker, *Fakesong*, 232–9. Billy Bragg can speak for himself: see *The Progressive Patriot* (London: Black Swan, 2007).
[29] Alex Niven, *Folk Opposition* (Zero Books: Winchester, UK; Washington NY, 2012), 1, 22.
[30] A. L. Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (1967; Paladin: St Alban's, 1975), 79.
[31] Pegg, *Folk*, 10.
[32] Irene Morra, *Britishness, Popular Music, and National Identity: The Making of Modern Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 45.
[33] Simon Featherstone, *Englishness: Twentieth-Century Popular Culture and the Forming of English Identities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 101. On the ideological construction and implications of 'Deep England' see Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985), 78–87; and Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Pimlico, 2008), 180–208.

English folk music as an immediate signifier of either an inherent Englishness or an innate, progressive populism', and because Shakespeare generates diverse meanings.[34]

When the demagogues of worldwide populist politics pronounce they derive strength from representing, and from the support of, communities 'left behind' by the effects of internationalised capitalism, we need to rethink Shakespeare's place and function in both local and transnational cultural economies. In other words, even as we rightly acknowledge and celebrate globalised Shakespeares, we must recognise and if necessary problematize nativist Shakespeares. Thinking of Shakespeare and folk, then, is one way to understand how people make meanings in an age of both ethno-nationalism (the regressive ideology that ethnic identity confers political legitimacy and authority) and Ethno England (a progressive project that sought to bring together indigenous 'folk' musicians from around the world to learn from each other).[35] As we will now see, the past and the present offer many, often connected, examples to help us realise these concerns better.

When Harley Met Cecil: Shakespeare, Folk, and 'Deep England'

In 1914, the musician, teacher, folklorist, and collector Cecil Sharp collaborated with the theatrical director Harley Granville-Barker on a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at London's Savoy Theatre. Granville-Barker is acclaimed as 'one of the most significant figures in the history of the modern English-speaking theatre'.[36] For his contributions to the revival of English folk song and dance in the first half of the twentieth century, Sharp, likewise, has been celebrated as 'more […] than a musician': 'He was an artist in humanity and a patriot'.[37] Their Shakespearean collaborations have been seen as presenting 'a style of production that still approximates to our ideas of the best in contemporary Shakespearian production'.[38]

Their collaboration bore early fruit in 1912, when Barker-Granville produced *The Winter's Tale* at the Savoy Theatre, for which Sharp 'arranged a number of English folksongs

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[34] Morra, *Britishness*, 46.
[35] See Walker Connor, 'The Politics of Ethnonationalism', *Journal of International Affairs* 27/1 (1973): 1–21; on Ethno England, see http://www.ethnoengland.co.uk/index.php (accessed 23 April 2019).
[36] Christine Dymkowski, *Harley Granville Barker: A Preface to Modern Shakespeare* (Washington, DC, London, and Toronto: Folger Books, 1986), 11.
[37] A. H. Fox Strangways, 'Appendix: Summary', in Maud Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp: His Life and Work* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 208–18; 218.
[38] Richard Eyre, 'Barker, Harley Granville (1877–1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33520 (accessed 23 April 2019).

to be played by a few appropriate instruments'; this was in contrast to previous productions where 'classical compositions played by a full orchestra had […] served as general background music'.[39] By 1914, Sharp's and Granville-Barker's syntheses were still unconventional, catholic and flexible, mixing different folk songs, 'original composition in the folk idiom', and songs from different plays.[40] We can get a sense of the energy of the integration in this description of the *Dream*:

> Titania's call for 'a roundel and a fairy song' was answered by a round; it then led into two folk melodies that Sharp selected to fit the lullaby lyrics. 'Greensleeves' was used for the Bergomask dance, heretofore omitted, and the dance was an authentic folk dance. Instead of the 'wedding march,' an adaptation of the ballad 'Lord Willoughby' was used. An arrangement of several folk dance tunes including 'Sellenger's round' was used for the fairy finale.[41]

In the 1910s, this kind of integration could have found a ready audience amongst the kinds of people who would have attended an event like the 1911 Shakespeare Summer Season, held at the Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. Participants could expect to see and put on a 'Folk Festival' each morning, followed by a 'Demonstration of Folk Song and Dance' in the afternoon, and a 'Shakespearean Play' in the evening. This strategy was designed to encourage and synthesise continuities between Shakespeare and folk music, dancing, and culture, past and present.[42] However, the contemporaneous critical reception for the 1912 *Tale* was mixed, with some reviewers seeing the displacement of the classical score as 'whimsical'.[43] Ambivalence peaked with the 'most controversial of the Savoy productions', the 1914 *Dream*, where the 'critical response' was 'mixed, violent, and surprising'; apparently, it 'set critics howling'.[44]

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[39] Dymkowski, *Granville Barker*, 43.
[40] Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp*, 121.
[41] Gary J. Williams, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: The English and American Popular Traditions and Harley Granville-Barker's 'World Arbitrarily Made'', *Theatre Studies* 23 (1976/77): 40–52; 49–50.
[42] Programme for Shakespeare Summer Season, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, CC/3/13 Shakespeare Summer Season: 22 July –19 August 1911: https://www.vwml.org/search?q=shakespeare%20summer%20season&is=1 (accessed 23 April 2019).
[43] Dymkowski, *Granville Barker*, 44.
[44] *Ibid*., 37.

To contextualise such reactions, some scholars have read the play in relation to the 'rights of women' question and the Suffragette movement. But though Terence Hawkes identifies 'the determined "Englishness" of Cecil Sharp's music', he does not elaborate on this, nor explore the significance of folk music to Sharp's and Granville-Barker's collaboration.[45] If anything, what Hawkes sees as Granville-Barker's urge to 'very firmly link the present to what he perceived as the realities of a Shakespearean past' becomes all the more evident if we do so.[46] Exploring the integration of folk and Shakespearean theatre also fleshes out some of the implications in Robert Shaughnessey's reading of the 'domestic element […] reinforced by Cecil Sharp's score' for a play which, as Shaughnessy notes, often functions as a 'national folktale' in its constructions of 'nationhood […] race and ethnicity'.[47] For, however varied the responses, some reviewers grasped the aims of some aspects of the production: *The Times* noted the Bergomask dance was 'right Warwickshire'.[48] In other words, conjoining Shakespeare and folk conjured an intensely proper, authentic, rural, localized pre-industrial England. For Granville-Barker himself, national identity cohered in Puck, who was, he suggested, 'as English as he can be' when compared to the other 'undoubtedly foreign' fairies.[49] And it seems Granville-Barker saw *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as especially English too, meaning it specifically required folk music in ways 'other plays' – for which folk 'will not serve' – did not.[50]

But what made this integration of Shakespeare and folk – and Englishness – happen at this time, and what was its significance? Addressing this question is not meant to privilege Granville-Barker as the only Shakespearean using folk worth looking at: as this chapter indicates, there are many others. Equally, the aim is not to isolate Sharp as the most important figure in the first English folk revival, especially given the consistent and compelling

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[45] Terence Hawkes, *Meaning by Shakespeare* (Routledge: London and New York, 1992), 36–8.
[46] Hawkes, *Meaning*, 36.
[47] Robert Shaughnessy, 'Dreams of England', in Sonia Massai (ed.), *World-wide Shakespeares: Local appropriations in film and performance* (Routledge: London and New York, 2005), 112–21; 115, 112–13.
[48] Cited in Dymkowksi, *Granville Barker*, 76.
[49] Granville-Barker, letter to William Archer (14 February 1914); cited in Dymkowski, *Granville Barker*, 63.
[50] Harley Granville-Barker, 'Preface to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (1924), in Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare:* A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Winter's Tale, Twelfth Night (Nick Hern Books: London, 1993), 53. This is an extended version of the Preface to the same play which Granville-Barker published in 1914.

critiques of a man some term a 'cultural dictator'.[51] That said, their collaboration inaugurated ways of thinking about and doing Shakespeare and folk that aggregated (still relevant) concerns about relating past and present, drama and music, aesthetics and politics, and Shakespeare and national – or 'racial' – identity.

This is because Sharp's and Granville-Barker's insistence on bringing together the quintessentially English drama of Shakespeare and no less quintessentially English folk music was an iteration of the 'arcadian connotations' of 'Deep England'.[52] At this historical moment, this construct was part of a wider response to a 'general crisis in urban society' from the 1880s to the First World War, in which a 'ruralist strain' was set against 'the recent past …] defined as un-English […] dominated by metropolitanism'.[53] This 'special British ruralism' was also the result of 'a tradition of Imperialist exile from home'; the comfort of 'Arcadian contrasts' was intensified as yearnings for any kind of 'pastoral oasis' intensified during the First World War.[54] Even without the gathering storm of war, following the death of Edward VII in 1910 a 'concatenation of developments' had created a 'perverted national culture': union militancy, suffragettism, Ireland, German expansionism in politics and culture (including 'in the concert hall').[55] Three years after Sharp's and Granville-Barker's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, G. K. Chesterton would thunder in terms that opposed indigenous 'folk' culture to a globalised modernity in crisis:

> The ordinary Englishman [was] duped out of his old possessions, such as they were, and always in the name of progress […] they took away his maypole, and his original rural life and promised him instead the Golden Age of Peace and Commerce.[56]

There was, some felt, a desperate need to see 'rural England' as a 'living thing', to help with 'guarding the traditions of the race'.[57] Recovering the 'songs' composed by 'the rustic' who

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[51] Boyes, *Imagined Village*, 163.
[52] *Ibid.*, 3.
[53] Alun Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England', in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880–1920* (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1986), 62–88; 63, 69.
[54] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 231–69.
[55] Boyes, *Imagined Village*, 23, 24, 41
[56] G. K. Chesterton, *A Short History of England* (London: Chatto, 1917), 131.
[57] H. V. Morton, *In Search of England* (1927), in Judy Giles and Tim Middleton (eds), *Writing Englishness, 1900–1950: An Introductory Sourcebook on National Identity* (London: Routledge, 1995), 87–91; 90.

‘saw fairies in mushroom rings’ might not, ultimately, ‘revive the English village’ – ‘vulgarisation’ by new media and technology had gone too far – but might yet save the cities.[58]

All was not yet lost, then. If, as John Masefield wrote in 1911, Shakespeare’s plays were ‘the greatest thing ever made by the English mind’, so events of the succeeding years only intensified his value as ‘a major national asset’. [59] Properly revived and underscored by folk, those plays represented part of the ‘Tudor construction’, a ‘source for remedying’ modernity, which, observes Alun Howkins, ‘was an extraordinarily powerful one’ because ‘it was English’: since ‘the music produced in the era of the Tudors […] seemed most Deeply English’, so did the drama produced at the same time.[60] Never mind that this figuring of the nation’s past, present, and future involved ‘associating Englishness with a specific social formation, the South Country’; but, notably, Granville-Barker’s and Sharp’s sensibilities were no less exclusive and reactionary.[61]

For while some may have said Sharp did not foster ‘the half-baked conception of “English for the English”, his ‘stress on *race*’ is pronounced and unavoidable.[62] We might say the same of Granville-Barker too. When he asked ‘What form does the English genius for self-expression most readily take?’, his answer was: drama and folk music.[63] Granville-Barker chooses his words very carefully here, as his reference to ‘self-expression’ mimics Sharp’s ideas about the defining characteristic of ‘Anglo-Saxon’ folk-song (as opposed to the ‘ornate feeling for beauty’ in the songs of ‘the Celt’).[64] The closeness of their thinking emphasises how Granville-Barker realised that English drama’s Englishness could and must be augmented when attuned to what he and others were beginning to see at the time as England’s defining music.

Since we cannot distinguish Sharp’s and Granville-Barker’s Shakespearean collaborations from the ‘quite aggressive artistic nationalism’ prevalent in the early 1900s, what they did with Shakespeare had profound roots and wide-ranging implications.[65] As

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[58] Morton, *In Search*, 87–91.
[59] John Masefield, *William Shakespeare* (London: Home University Library, 1911), v; Fussell, *The Great War*, 197.
[60] Howkins, ‘Discovery’, 70–72; Calder, *Myth of the Blitz*, 194.
[61] Howkins, ‘Discovery’, 72.
[62] Strangways, ‘Summary’, 210; Harker, *Fakesong*, 184 (italics in original).
[63] Harley Granville-Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1922), xi.
[64] Sharp, *English Folk Song*, 29.
[65] Vic Gammon, ‘Folk Song Collecting in Sussex and Surrey, 1843–1914’, *History Workshop Journal* 10 (1986): 61–89; 77.

Granville-Barker 'proposed and planned a national theatre', so he 'created a new English drama', and has been feted for doing so.[66] Put another way, he sought to revive what he perceived as Englishness in and through drama. For Granville-Barker, in 1922, 'the drama is, of all others, an intensely racial art'; in 1931, it was, he said, 'the most national of arts'.[67] Comparably, for Sharp in 1907, however much music was a 'universal language', a musician 'betrays his nationality in his music'.[68] Sharp contended that 'the earliest form of music, folk-song', was 'a racial product': 'The natural musical idiom of a nation will […] be found in its purest and most unadulterated form in its folk music'.[69] In this, Sharp finessed ideas articulated by others, such as Sir Hubert Parry, about the need for a 'resumption of shared racial expression through 'the pure, quintessentially English culture of the rural Folk'.[70] Granville-Barker and Sharp thus militated to purify and take back control of English drama, and English music: 'the integrity of the English theatre has been destroyed', Granville-Barker argued, by 'foreign influence' from at least '1660 onwards'.[71] Sharp too, identified long-standing and pernicious outside influences on English music: 'for centuries past it has been the fashion in England to honour the foreign and decry the native-born musician […] Foreign vocalists, singing in a foreign tongue, have for two centuries monopolized the operatic stage [...] music has been in the hands of the foreigner'.[72]

For Granville-Barker, revival required recognising what made particular kinds of drama, made in particular places, by particular 'races', what they were:

> Consider the work of three such dramatists as Shakespeare, [Gabriele] d'Annunzio [the Italian proto-fascist], Tchekov. Apart from all excellence of content, is not its salient quality[…]racial expressiveness, and does not this necessarily dictate method and, finally, form?[73]

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[66] Dymkowski, *Granville Barker*, 11; Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* (London: Hogarth Press, 1989), 234.
[67] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, ix.
[68] Sharp, *English Folk Song*, 129
[69] *Ibid*., 130.
[70] Cited in Boyes, *Imagined Village*, 27.
[71] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, x–xi.
[72] Sharp, *English Folk Song*, 128–9, 131.
[73] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, x.

As that quotation suggests, the 'whole canon of Shakespeare' was central to the 'repertory […] of any purely English theatre'.[74] And it was critical to revive 'the Elizabethan theatre' because it was 'the only typically English form of drama of striking value so far'.[75] Granville-Barker wanted a national theatre to operate 'as school' for the nation, as well as drama's 'cathedral', and Shakespeare had to be part of the order of service.[76] Sharp, likewise, wanted a 'National School of English Music'.[77] For such a school to work, songs had to be 'chosen with discrimination': 'English folk-songs for English children, not German, French, or even Scottish or Irish'.[78] There was much at stake in this effort: 'Our system of education is, at present, too cosmopolitan, it is calculated to produce citizens of the world rather than Englishmen. And it is Englishmen, English citizens, that we want.'[79] These connections in their thinking meant that when Granville-Barker was explicit in his aims for a 'racial' drama, he was also clear about his debt to Sharp for helping him fulfil them:

> How should the fairies dance? Here I give up my part of apologist to Cecil Sharp. I only know they should have no truck with a strange technique brought from Italy in the eighteenth century. If there is an English way of dancing – and Sharp says there is – should not that be their way? And what tunes should they sing to? English tunes.[80]

We might note, here, the use of the present tense: 'there is' an English way of dancing, and, by implication, singing, acting, and being. Aligning English 'folk' music with drama, the 1914 *Dream* envisioned a 'valid succession', a continuity between periods in England's history; anything other than this would mean 'true tradition be lost'.[81] This anything other included Mendelssohn's classical music for the play, and when Granville-Barker describes that music, it is precisely its otherness that animates him:

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[74] *Ibid*., 276.
[75] Granville-Barker, *A National Theatre* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1930), 130; Granville-Barker, *On Dramatic Method, being the Clark lectures for 1930* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1931), 188.
[76] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, 78; Granville-Barker, *A National Theatre*, 1.
[77] Sharp, *English Folk Song*, 129.
[78] *Ibid*., 134
[79] *Ibid*., 135–6.
[80] Harley Granville-Barker, 'Preface to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (1914), in Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, 36.
[81] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, 279.

> [A]part from the question of intrinsic suitability, [Mendelssohn's score] involves a quite unallowable treatment of the text; involves besides, the practical suppression of the lyrics. 'You spotted snakes', for instance, might be written in German or Choctaw for any sense that the cleverest singer of it to this music can make for the keenest listener.[82]

There is something intrinsic to Shakespeare (his Englishness), and to Mendelssohn (his non-Englishness), that makes conjugating them unsuitable, and 'unallowable': 'Country dance' not classical music 'is thrust on us by the text'.[83] Using Mendelssohn would alienate English audiences from 'the music of the poetry' in Shakespeare, and estrange them from themselves: 'One does Shakespeare ill service by setting his plays in visual surroundings which […] deform them. Is it better to blanket them with sounds as foreign?'[84] Since the production was to evoke Englishness, English music was essential: 'if there is such a thing as racial memory, music […] could be counted on to call it to life'.[85] For Granville-Barker, as for Sharp, music was an indicator and delineator of 'racial': 'Bagpipes suggest Scotland, a guitar Italy, a tomtom the jungle'.[86] What would evoke England, and Shakespeare's England? Naturally, English folk, the organic, communal, pure, eternal music of the nation, 'impervious to the passage of time […] a growth, not a composition', as Granville-Barker rendered Sharp's words.[87] With its 'roots in the ages', English folk was Granville-Barker's device for collapsing time and space between earlier and later Englands: it 'must have sounded familiarly in Shakespeare's ears, as it still […sounds somehow familiar to us'.[88]

H. G. Welles' *The Time Machine* was published in 1895; just a few years later Granville-Barker was himself developing a vision, in this case of Shakespeare, that might permit audiences to time travel: 'I am sure at least that you can sing and dance a man back into the seventeenth century far more easily than you can argue him there.'[89] Granville-Barker knew this would be difficult. There was, he accepted, a 'finally unbridgeable gulf

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[82] Granville-Barker, 'Preface to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (1924), 50.
[83] *Ibid*.
[84] *Ibid*., 42, 52.
[85] *Ibid*., 80n.14.
[86] *Ibid*. 52.
[87] *Ibid*. 53.
[88] *Ibid*.
[89] *Ibid*., 53.

between […] our day and Shakespeare's'; but this did not mean connections should not be imagined by synthesizing Shakespeare and folk.

Though difficult, this synthesis was conceivable because Granville-Barker read (or heard) drama in musical terms. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was the greatest hit of the best composer, 'less a play […] than a musical symphony', with Oberon, Titania, and Puck pronouncing 'screeds of word-music': 'The whole play […] is conceived as music'.[90] Such synthesis informed how he directed, and his belief about the purpose of directing:

> To hold an audience to the end entranced with the play's beauty one depends much upon the right changing of tune and time, and the shifting of key from scene to scene. And all the time it must be delightful to listen to, musical, with each change in a definite and purposeful relation to what went before, to what will come after.[91]

Given what was at stake for Granville-Barker in his model of drama as rejuvenating Englishness, we might infer that his sense of 'what went before' and 'what will come after' includes not only sequences of scenes in the play but also an imagined or anticipated continuity between England's past (revived through producing this drama) and 'the future of our race'.[92] This too harmonised with the aims of the Folk Revival, which envisioned 'not simply a world as it had been but a world as it could be again'.[93]

Such a future (and past) could be jeopardised if Shakespearean productions were off-key or hit bum-notes: Granville-Barker complains that audiences 'still suffer' the 'meaningless oppression' of 'the bass Claudius and contralto Gertrude, brass-bound effigies', or Lady Macbeth played as a 'clarion-noted matron'.[94] Moreover, it was not a foregone conclusion that using English folk music would necessarily bring English audiences of Shakespeare to a fuller, more authentic sense of the playwright and their nation. For Sharp, there were affinities between 'folk-poetry' and the 'simplicity and directness' of Shakespeare.[95] But while 'Shakespeare mentions a great many dances', they are 'very nearly

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[90] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, 225; Granville-Barker, 'Preface to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (1914), 34; Granville-Barker, *On Dramatic Method*, 74.
[91] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, 225.
[92] *Ibid*., 277.
[93] Boyes, *Imagined Village*, 4.
[94] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, 278–9.
[95] Sharp, *English Folk Song*, 102.

all Court dances mainly French in origin'.[96] Moreover, the theatre 'is not, perhaps, the ideal place for an exhibition of folk-dances'; all the same, for the greater good, compromises had to be made: 'it is the only place in which the dances can be advantageously seen by a large number of people'.[97]

Granville-Barker acknowledged that, for his part, Sharp was cautious and careful about amalgamating Shakespeare and music. He notes that Sharp 'rejects' adapting 'Elizabethan music originally set to other words', and 'composing […] music in the Elizabethan idiom'. Sharp does so, Granville-Barker tells us in paraphrase, because he thinks 'To us Elizabethan music always sounds strange, unfamiliar, archaic – and, to some extent, precious'. Granville-Barker did not did not want audiences to endure the 'tyrannous noise' of 'modern musicians' either, but also deviated slightly from Sharp to suggest: 'It is just because Elizabethan music *is* somewhat unfamiliar to the ear that I advocate it'. Set against this, Granville-Barker sustained his ideal that relating drama and music could create harmonies between Shakespeare's period and his own, contending 'there is a case for compromise between past and present'.[98]

Sharp's concern about the challenges of providing a folk score for Shakespeare matched his awareness of the contradictions of defining English folk: he attributes the coinage of 'the word folk-song' to work published in 1878 by Carl Engel, a scholar 'of German extraction'.[99] Indeed, Sharp spends much of *English Folk Song* wishing the tuition of English folk music could be like the tuition of indigenous music is elsewhere. This reminds us that, whatever Sharp's and Granville-Barker's aims, just as '*nobody* is fully English […] every empirical Englishman contains something "non-English"', so English folk music is inherently and always understood in relation – and sometimes opposition to, or fear or awe of – something foreign.[100] This is why contact with non-English identities and locations only intensifies Sharp's sense of the Englishness of the model of Shakespearean folk he championed. When Granville-Barker's *Dream* crossed the Atlantic after 1914, Sharp brought

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[96] Cecil Sharp, 'Shakespeare and Folk Dance and Drama', Lecture to the Shakespeare Association (15 December 1922), Cecil Sharp Manuscript Collection, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, The English Folk Dance and Song Society, CJS1/5/47, 5: https://www.vwml.org/record/CJS1/5/47 (accessed 4 April 2019).
[97] Sharp, programme note to *Twelfth Night*, directed by Granville-Barker (1912), cited in Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp*, 118.
[98] Granville-Barker, 'Preface to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (1924), 52.
[99] Sharp, *English Folk Song*, 2.
[100] Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002), 110.

English folk and Shakespeare together again through contributing to Percy Mackaye's *Masque of Caliban* in 1916. In amongst the hybridity and bustle of early twentieth-century New York, the Englishness of Sharp's folk music and dancing would be, to him, even more expressive and exclusive due to the transplanting: 'No country in the world can be gay in the simple, fresh way that England can […] I felt more proud of being an Englishman than I have ever felt before.'[101]

Clearly, too, even as we discuss what happens to aesthetic form and 'racial' identity in the context of one particular production of a Shakespearean play integrating folk music, we cannot forget the way *A Midsummer Night's Dream* itself eagerly interrogates the boundaries of empire and ethnicity.[102] Indeed, some of the consternation and fascination with the 1914 *Dream* derived not from its attempts to stage a folk Englishness, but from the way it foregrounded foreignness, in fairies other than Puck. Nor can we ignore the 'strong strain of progressive radicalism' in Sharp's ideas, which were 'a bizarre mixture of radical and reactionary elements'.[103] Granville-Barker, too, can be seen to have progressive aims: 'Unity in diversity must be our social ideal, and it is in this that drama in its very nature does expand'.[104] They sought to bind the folk through folk to improve the nation for all. Yet, as we recollect this chapter's second epigraph, and consider criticism on the play, we can see that what Sharp and Granville-Barker sought to do with Shakespeare and folk in the early 1900s can seem toxic – or tantalising – to modern ears, depending on one's political proclivities: 'our perceptions of the past are always presentist, in the sense that we are always immersed in our own ideologies and aesthetics as we work to reconstruct the past'.[105] Hugh Grady's comment applies to us now, and what we make of what happened when Harley met Cecil, as much as it does to what they did with folk music and Shakespeare.

For in the shadow of this *Dream*, a new generation of self-appointed socio-cultural crusaders would perceive that the times were out of joint, that they had been born to set them right, and that there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in the philosophies currently enervating urban life, popular culture, and democracy. Rolf Gardiner,

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[101] Sharp, cited in Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp*, 133.
[102] For a classic exposition of this, see Margo Hendricks, '"Obscured by dreams": Race, Empire, and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47/1 (1996): 37–60.
[103] James Reeves, *The Idiom of the People: English Traditional Verse* (London: Mercury Books, 1958), 6; Harker, *Fakesong*, 175.
[104] Granville-Barker, *Exemplary Theatre*, 128.
[105] Hugh Grady, 'Shakespeare and Impure Aesthetics: The Case of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59/3 (2008): 274–302; 279.

ruralist, Nazi-apologist and founder of the Travelling Morrice, opined that 'a form of Fascism' was required to 'rescue' modern nations, and Shakespeare could help in the struggle.[106] Three years after Gardiner made this point, a headline in *Blackshirt* proclaimed: 'Shakespeare would have been a Fascist'.[107] So, echoing Hamlet, Gardiner saw his role in making fascism happen in terms of Shakespeare and folk:

> we refused to accept the stale, flat and unprofitable religion of the day, scientific scepticism, as our guide […] Nostalgia was to a very high degree a spur to action. The music of an older Europe, the culture of pre-industrial England, the wonder of landscapes haunted by ghosts of a remote past, here were some of the tutors of our inspiration.[108]

That these dangerous potentials, encapsulated by the integration of folk and Shakespeare, are so obvious now is evident from how easily they are parodied. In a 2016 edition of the *Viz* comic strip 'Real Ale Twats', the titular quaffers of proper beer repair to a pub to revel unassailed in their renditions of 'traditional music as it should be played', including their take on 'a song composed by King Henry VIII in circa 1513'. The pub's landlord cites Shakespeare to note that the Twats 'share' his 'historical interest in the rich cultural heritage of this fair scepter'd isle we call England', and invites them to join his 'little group […] to chat about indigenous folk music and related subjects […] and put the world to rights'. Cue their entry to a backroom adorned with swastikas and a picture of Hitler, peopled by plotting, gun-toting skinheads and assorted loons.[109] We might seek to comfort ourselves that such concerns about linking culture, politics and national identity remain in the past. But they do not: 'In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, music – its culture, its sound, its various celebrations and receptions – has gained a particular importance in the definition and assertion of British national identity.'[110] We shall now see how, a hundred years after Sharp's and Granville-Barker's collaboration, these assertions assumed new forms.

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[106] Rolf Gardiner, *World Without End: British Politics and the Younger Generation* (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1932), 33.
[107] Kathleen Texera, 'Shakespeare would have been a Fascist', *Blackshirt* (18 April 1935): 4.
[108] Rolf Gardiner, *England Herself: Ventures in Rural Restoration* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 61–2.
[109] 'Real Ale Twats', in *Viz: The Bookie's Pencil: Issues 232–241* (Dennis Publishing: London, 2016), 123. *Viz* also ran a strip called 'The Folkie', which roasted the more extreme affectations of folk musicians.
[110] Morra, *Britishness*, ix.

All in It Together, As We Like It? Alternate Takes on Folk and the Golden Age

Having considered the effects of the first folk revival, we can now ask: what forms did Shakespeare and folk take following English folk's second 'revival' in the decades after the Second World War, and more recently in the 2000s? With the postwar 'baby-boom' generation's growing maturity, and popular music's increasing diversification, the late 1960s witnessed a flowering of pop-rock with folkish overtones. Shakespeare had a pervasive presence here, as an inspiration for 'pastoral myths for the smoke-bound consumer, hallucinatory trips to the country and rebirth in the secret gardens of childhood'.[111] Provoked by Laurence Olivier's invitation to compose songs for a production of *As You Like It*, Donovan re-imagined 'Under the Greenwood Tree' on his 1967 album *a gift from a flower to a garden*. The same year, Kaleidoscope fancied 'Shakespeare floats with wild roses in his head' on their album *Tangerine Dream*.[112] In 1969, The Sallyangie released 'Midsummer Night's Happening' on their album *Children of the Sun*, 'an admixture of starlight, golden innocence, dreamy idealism and lightly narcotised surrealism', and the cover of *Unicorn*, an album of the same year by Marc Bolan's guitar-and-bongo-bothering Tyrannosaurus Rex, featured 'a *Children's Shakespeare*' alongside other 'trappings of mystical learning'.[113] As 60s dreams evaporated, Shakespeare found a home in the edgier fringes of folk-inspired music, notably the 'fungal acoustic music with spores of pan-European folk' of the Third Ear Band, who provided the soundtrack for Roman Polanski's 1971 'dark-age rendering of *Macbeth*', conceived in the aftermath of the Manson murders.[114] From childlike innocence to infanticide in a matter of years, Shakespeare's links with folk were nothing if not ever-mutating.

The mutations of popular and folk-music culture also entered into Shakespearean theatrical productions. But despite creating the feel of a 'rustic pop festival' with her 1973 *As You Like It* for the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), Buzz Goodbody was far from convinced about the sustainability or desirability of getting 'back to the land': 'Living in Glastonbury and growing turnips doesn't appeal to me. You might feel purer by doing it, but it is escaping nonetheless'.[115]

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[111] Young, *Electric Eden*, 460.
[112] *Ibid.*, 461.
[113] *Ibid.*, 460, 468.
[114] *Ibid.*, 473.
[115] Martin Shulman, 'Review', *Evening Standard* (13 July 1973); Buzz Goodbody, interview in *Daily Telegraph* (13 July 1973), both cited in Dympna Callaghan, 'Buzz Goodbody:

Notwithstanding Goodbody's reservations, *As You Like It* has remained a key touchstone text for integrations of popular-folk music cultures (especially festival culture) and Shakespeare, most notably in the next production in focus here: Maria Aberg's 2013 staging for the RSC. We have seen how Granville-Barker wanted a national theatre, with Shakespeare playing a prominent role, to be a 'cathedral' for the nation's worship of art, and itself; for Aberg, comparably, 'a Shakespeare play […] is like a cathedral, you can just fill it.'[116] Despite the difference in years or perspectives, how did the assumptions and implications involved in these two directors' attempts to bring Shakespeare and folk together compare?

As will become evident, Aberg's production did seek to construct – or resurrect – 'an ethic of fluent commonality in Arden' akin to the *communitas* sought by folk revivalists of a century before, based on pastoral, cross-class, participatory experience.[117] Indeed, despite Sharp's involvement in Granville-Baker's *Dream*, *As You Like It* has long been seen as particularly useful for offering vital continuities with ancient folk-cultural forms which later stagings could reproduce and revive.[118] The (undated) cover for the programme for the 'Merrie England Once More' event, organised by Sharp's co-revivalist (and rival) Mary Neal, featured an image of Morris dancers from *Punch* magazine, but was topped by a quotation from 1.1 of *As You Like It* conjuring precisely the prelapsarian paradise some thought the play sustained: 'Let us "fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world."'[119] This is folk culture as Eden, before the fall into sin, temporality, mortality (and modernity); it is a potent myth.

But why revive such continuities (and myths) in the 2010s? Partly because, as with the 1910s, there was something in the air linking Shakespeare and folk. Rob Young's panoramic survey of folk music in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – *Electric Eden: Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music* – appeared in 2010. This featured as one of its

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Directing for Change', in Jean I. Marsden (ed.), *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth* (London and New York: Harvester, 1991), 163–81.

[116] Maria Aberg, 'Wildefire: An Interview with Maria Aberg', 2014. https://www.hampsteadtheatre.com/news/2014/11/wildefire-an-interview-with-maria-aberg (accessed 23 April 2019).

[117] Jay Griffiths, 'Into the Woods', *As You like It*, RSC programme (2013), n.p.; Boyes, *Imagined Village*, 35.

[118] Griffiths, 'Into the Woods', n.p.

[119] Espérance Club Collection, Mary Neal Manuscript Collection (MN/4/3), Vaughan Williams Memorial Library: https://www.vwml.org/record/MN/4/3 (accessed 23 April 2019).

epigraphs Caliban's lines (from *The Tempest* 3.2) about an 'isle full of noises' (the other came from William Blake). Whatever its currency in that cultural moment – it featured again in the ceremony to open the 2012 London Olympics – in this context Caliban's speech serves several functions. We once knew and experienced visions produced by the 'noises' autochthonically generated by this 'isle', in some kind of British – or 'Deep English' – dream-time. But we have woken, forgotten, and should therefore wish to recover our connection to those place-based sounds, to 'dream again'. Why? The following quotation from Blake's *A Vision of the Last Judgement* (1810) offers some pointers: 'The nature of my work is Visionary or Imaginative; it is an Endeavour to Restore what the Ancients calld the Golden Age'.[120]

As ever, political contexts interacted with cultural concerns. In 2009, reflecting on the impact of yet another global economic crisis on the nation he wanted to lead, David Cameron, then leader of the Conservative Party, famously asserted said 'we're all in this together'.[121] One way for Cameron and his peers to evoke this togetherness was to emphasise their inclusive, communitarian, and environmentalist credentials in what has been termed 'Green Toryism'.[122] Yet, as Alex Niven argues, with Green Toryism, 'pastoral myth' became 'a means of hiding inequality under a carapace of fairytale, neo-feudal commonality': 'avowals of folksiness and green identity were part of a top-down inversion of the notion of an indigenous grassroots'.[123] Published just a year before Aberg's production, Niven's *Folk Opposition* eviscerated how 'the co-option of folk and roots motifs by the New Tory ascendancy' accorded with the commercial success of 'nu-folk, a middlebrow form of pastoral pop', typified by the likes of Mumford and Sons, a subgenre also characterised as 'Tory rock-lite'.[124]

These trends became only more pronounced and hegemonic following the election in May 2010 of Cameron's Conservative Party in coalition government with the Liberal Democrats. For all the Conservatives' talk of folksy commonality, a purported driver of this

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[120] Young, *Electric Eden*, v.
[121] David Cameron, Conference Speech (Manchester, 8 October 2009): https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2009/oct/08/david-cameron-speech-in-full (accessed 15 March 2019).
[122] Niven, *Folk Opposition*, 39.
[123] *Ibid*., 39, 30–31.
[124] Niven, *Folk Opposition*, 2, 25; Jon Savage, 'Jon Savage on song: Roy Harper serves up Hors D'Oeuvres', *The Guardian* (26 January 2011): https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2011/jan/26/jon-savage-roy-harper (accessed 23 April 2019).

administration was balancing the nation's books: 'The age of irresponsibility is giving way to the age of austerity.'[125] From one view, voiced in *As You like It*, there is no contradiction here: in the words of Duke Senior, 'Sweet are the uses of adversity' when one can find, in 'these woods', 'good in everything' (2.1.1–16). To Niven, however, precisely because it sought to mystify any contradictions, the cultural 'co-option' of folk had ideological aims:

> Why did this new plutocracy seize so eagerly on nu-folk pop music as a means of culturally defining itself, and what sort of worldview was being affirmed by this consumer fantasy of bucolic populism? […] As Cameron's New Tories began to implement the most profoundly un-sympathetic, anti-populist agenda in living memory, there was solace in the mirage of an eternal, agrarian world that would safeguard earthiness, simplicity, quasi-pagan mythology, and primitive labour no matter how viciously actual working class people were treated by a neoliberal economy founded on minority (urban) affluence.[126]

Niven traces the roots of this 'bourgeois pastoralism back to 'the upper-middle-class misappropriation of popular art forms', as perpetrated by Sharp and others.[127] Coincidentally, in October 2010, Cecil Sharp House hosted an event called 'Mumford and Sons and Friends', including Laura Marling – devotee of the 'drop D, D A D G A D' guitar tuning so beloved of 60s folkies, nominee for best original song in the 2011 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, and soon-to-be composer for Aberg's score.[128] Like Mumford and Sons, citing *Much Ado About Nothing* on 'Sigh no More' (2011), Marling had form in connecting with Shakespeare. Her second album, *I Speak Because I Can* (2010), featured several songs with Shakespearean allusions or connotations, often to explore issues of female expression (or silencing). 'Made by Maid' spoke of 'love's labours never lost', while 'Hope in the Air' channelled Cordelia in the despairing lines: 'No hope in the air, / No hope in the water, / Not even for me your last serving daughter'. Similarly, 'What He Wrote', while evoking wartime letters, also echoed Lavinia: 'he cut out my tongue / there is nothing to say'.[129]

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[125] David Cameron, Speech (Cheltenham, 26 April 2009): https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601367 (accessed 15 March 2019).
[126] Niven, *Folk Opposition*, 28, 30.
[127] *Ibid*., 34.
[128] Laura Marling, interview in Daniel Rachel, *Isle of Noises: Conversations with Great British Songwriters* (London: Pimlico, 2013), 529.
[129]

Realising these contexts, interactions, and Niven's critique is vital for helping us understand what it would mean to stage a folk Shakespeare in the 2010s in which a particular kind of communal, pastoral, deep Englishness is celebrated. Yet in the 2010s, and before, during and after Aberg's production, other ideological forces were at work. We have already heard Sharp's complaint that education in England in the early 1900s produced 'citizens of the world rather than Englishmen'; comparable concerns about national identity in a globalised age were raised preceding and following the 2016 Brexit vote. In 2005, Paul Kingsnorth issued a manifesto addressing these concerns: 'In an age of global consumerism, corporate power and the dominance of homogenising placeless, economic ideology, the one truly radical thing to do is to belong. […] [T]he way to fight back is by knowing your place.'[130] By 2008, echoing Sharp (and himself), Kingsnorth argued 'We can be Citizens of Nowhere or we can know our place'.[131] And, like Sharp, Kingsnorth lamented that one consequence of people becoming 'citizens of nowhere' was 'We can't sing our own folk songs'.[132] As it had in the 1910s, singing – or staging – folk song thus becomes a potent marker of national identity in crisis. Kingsnorth's laments, oppositions and injunctions subsequently fed into other commentators' diagnoses of the divided conditions producing divisive phenomena: 'Somewheres are more rooted […] Most Anywheres see themselves as citizens of the world.'[133] This ideology of multiple divisions (within and between an embattled nation and the wider world) infected mainstream political discourse as Theresa May, David Cameron's successor as Conservative Prime Minister, opined 'if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere'.[134]

In what ways, we might then ask, did Aberg's *As You Like It* 'conjure' the audience, as Rosalind has it (Epilogue, 9), and contribute to, or confound and contest, these discriminations and dictates about the importance of knowing your place (in an ordered hierarchy, or the wider world), knowing your community, and knowing the indigenous folk culture that is seemingly under threat in it? In other words, does this folk *As You like It*

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[130] Paul Kingsnorth, 'Know Your Place', *New Statesman*, 5 September 2005. https://old.paulkingsnorth.net/place.html (accessed 22 April 2019).
[131] Paul Kingsnorth, *Real England: The Battle Against the Bland* (London: Portobello Books, 2008), 286.
[132] Kingsnorth, *Real England*, 283.
[133] David Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics* (London: Hurst and Company, 2017), 3–5.
[134] Theresa May, Conservative Party Conference Speech (Birmingham, 6 October 2016): https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/05/theresa-mays-conference-speech-in-full (accessed 23 April 2019).

mystify or make plain the implications unearthed as Green Toryism shaded into or manifested a nativist 'völkisch environmentalism' and Deep English mentalities?[135] Such questions are complicated because this kind of production could be seen to constitute an ironic 'greenwashing' for the RSC, as its sponsorship by the global oil company once known as British Petroleum began in 2012.[136] To echo this chapter's third epigraph, from Jez Butterworth's much-celebrated 2009 play about the conflicted English pastoral, *Jerusalem*: what, in the 2000s, was this figuring of a forest in England for, or against?

Certainly, Aberg's directorial choices, including commissioning Marling, fit with how the context rediscovered, reappropriated, and repoliticized folk. As when Sharp collaborated with Granville-Barker, Marling's settings in a contemporary folk idiom sought to revive harmonies and continuities between ostensibly lost aspects of a vision of Shakespeare's pastoral 'golden world' (1.1.103), and ours. Aberg was unequivocal that this was not meant to be some costume-drama period piece, but a weird and wonderful hybridizing of past and present identities and cultures. Aberg reflected on rehearsal workshops that 'we explored rural dancing, we looked at a lot of different pagan traditions to mark the passing of the seasons'.[137] Yet while the production might have required atavistic fixtures like 'Hymen with deer antlers'[138] and ribbons 'Pagan, maypole style',[139] the props list was clear about when and where this was happening: 'Setting: England Time Period: Modern Day'.[140] When the staging of 2.7 featured a husk of a car, a brazier, and cider-drinking woodland characters, the closest analogue might indeed have been Butterworth's *Jerusalem*, which begins on St George's Day (and Shakespeare's birthday) in 1999, yet its characters seem to shift in time.

The opening court setting for 1.2 was austere, starkly anti-pastoral, and characterised by what Aberg described as scenic and physical 'rigidity'.[141] In the dark, when not lit by lurid

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[135] Out of the Woods, 'Lies of the land: against and beyond Paul Kingsnorth's völkisch environmentalism', 31 March 2017: https://libcom.org/blog/lies-land-against-beyond-paul-kingsnorths-völkisch-environmentalism-31032017 (accessed 23 April 2019).
[136] See Mark Rylance, 'With its links to BP, I can't stay in the Royal Shakespeare Company', *The Guardian* (21 June 2019): https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/21/royal-shakespeare-company-rsc-bp-sponsorship-climate-crisis (accessed 22 June 2019).
[137] Maria Aberg, interview with Nicky Cox, *Theatre Voice*, 2 May 2013. http://www.theatrevoice.com/audio/maria-ahberg-on-falling-in-love-with-as-you-like-it(accessed 4 April 2019).
[138] *As You Like It*, RSC production meeting minutes (21 February 2013).
[139] *As You Like It*, RSC props and furniture list, v.8 (26 September 2013).
[140] *Ibid*.
[141] Aberg, interview with Nicky Cox.

neon strip lights, a ticking clock underscored slabs of doomy synthesiser noise, and regulated (almost) everyone's movements to a metronymic strictness, as surely as the black costumes enforced conformity. There might be 'no clock i'th' forest' (3.2.274–5) of Arden, but in Aberg's Duke's domain there definitely was, ensuring gestures were robotic, dehumanised, and restricted. Arden may have been 'not an idealised pastoral'.[142] However, to set the court up as no Edenic state, but a place that signified a morbid, alienating, inorganic regimentation, necessarily established the forest as somewhere holism and mindfulness could be achieved: to Duke Senior the wind provides 'counsellors that feelingly persuade me what I am' (2.1.10–11). The forest moved, audibly, to a different rhythm. And as the harsh music of the opening set the tone there, Marling's songs for the forest were 'antithetic to any sophisticated, court or city setting', as they sought to evoke and augment a regained, organic, wholesome merging.[143] Synthesisers and digitised click-tracks were supplanted by accordions, ascending flute scales, birdsong mingled with the human voice, brushed cymbals. Unsuprisingly, given these mergings and hybridities, for Aberg, mud was a key signifying substance, because it 'felt like Arden, organic, soft, and welcoming, and a bit messy'.[144]

However, just as Aberg avoided costume drama, so Marling's score did not simply reconstruct some pseudo-historical musical arrangement.[145] In a 2013 interview, Aberg related how she felt Marling 'comes from quite a folky tradition'.[146] Yet what appealed as much as this link to 'tradition' was the potential of Marling's songs to 'modernize the play'.[147] Aberg recounts that she gave Marling considerable freedom, with the result that she remained faithful to some of the lyrics but was freer with others.[148] This modernizing integration of songs from the play and a contemporary folk idiom took many forms. In 'Blow, Blow, Winter Wind' (2.7) 'thou' is excised or translated to 'you'. Elsewhere, as Jonathan Afonso notes, 'the songwriter modernizes the text by replacing "Fortune," a concept that is less common in our day than in Shakespeare's, by "life."'[149] Marling's version of

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[142] Griffiths, 'Into the Woods'.
[143] Jonathan Afonso, *When Indie Meets Shakespeare: Laura Marling's Songs for As You Like It*, Academia.edu, n.d. http://www.academia.edu/10247958/When_Indie_Meets_Shakespeare_Laura_Marlings_Songs_for_As_You_Like_It (accessed 4 April 2019); 4.
[144] Aberg, interview with Cox.
[145] All references are to RSC, *Songs for As You Like It* (2013; download).
[146] Aberg, interview with Cox
[147] Afonso, *Indie*, 3–4.
[148] Aberg, interview with Cox.
[149] Afonso, *Indie*, 3–4.

‘Under the Greenwood Tree’, from 2.5, updates nouns, verbs, and prepositions to contemporary English. In Marling’s rendering, ‘Who doth ambition shun’ becomes ‘Those who ambition shun’; ‘And love to live i’th’sun’ becomes ‘will live beneath the sun’; ‘Come hither’, becomes ‘Come by me’. This last change is significant because if the aim of the adaptation, like Granville-Barker’s, is to absorb a modern audience, then a phrase seeking to do just that should practise what it preaches. This inclusivity is matched by the cast recording of the song, on which a solo singer backed with acoustic guitar is eventually joined by a choir and other instruments: others do ‘come hither’ – in a mood of collective peace, not individual ambition. And to evoke these comminglings and connections, in Marling’s version, definite articles become indefinite – despite this version of the song keeping the traditional title, what the song describes now happens under ‘a’ not ‘the’ greenwood tree.

In Aberg’s Arden, characters were off grid, off the map, and sometimes off their heads: ‘I’m away with the trees’, as ‘Rosalind’s Song’ put it. But people were also discovering themselves, far from authority’s abrasive austerity: in ‘Greenwood Tree’ there is ‘no enemy’. The wood, said Aberg, is ‘the place where [Rosalind] can figure out who she is’.[150] Identity and subjectivity are both lost and found here, amidst the pastoral scene. Marling’s version of ‘Blow, Blow, Winter Wind’ echoes ‘Greenwood Tree’ to stress ‘Should I be lost that’s where I’ll be’. By the comedy’s end, the weddings signalled a people coming together, soundtracked by massed singers creating anthemic, wordless songs, such as ‘The Wedding Dance/Blow, Blow (Reprise)’, recollecting familiar melodies audiences had already heard: ‘the final song will have the participatory feel of a huge gig, rather than a traditional Shakespearean jig’.[151]

The production’s festival aesthetic powerfully amplified these celebratory and far-from-austere themes. This was evident in the RSC’s trailer for what they dubbed ‘Shakespeare’s Anarchic Summer Love Story’, which did not identify characters or point to the plot, but presented itself as footage of revellers at some bucolic happening in a ‘holiday humour’ (4.1.59–60).[152] Again, like Sharp and Granville-Barker, the team behind the production were finding ways to overcome gaps between past and present Englands, as the movement director, Ayse Tashkiran, suggested:

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[150] Aberg, interview with Cox.
[151] Ayse Tashkiran, ‘Dance Like Nobody’s Watching’, *As You Like It*, RSC programme (2013), n.p..
[152] RSC, trailer for Maria Aberg’s *As You Like It*, 26 March 2013; https://youtu.be/qpEqv7DAPV4 (accessed 23 April 2019).

> I read around the 'humours', 'rural life', women living as men […] I listened to contemporary folk music too. This background research helped to build a bridge between the images in Shakespeare's language and our contemporary setting. I also looked at audience behaviour at contemporary music festivals […] Maria [Aberg] and I both loved how festival-goers […] live with a type of physical abandon and celebrate shared music and dance.[153]

We might note Tashkiran's repeated usage of 'contemporary' here: dance, accompanied by folkish music, in a festival setting, is meant to combat the characters' (and audiences') alienation from the past, but also from each other in the present, and from the environment they share. Even if austere authority comes under attack here, 'Green Toryism' finds analogues in a green-tinged conservatism. Aberg herself reinforced these perspectives on how her festival-themed production could resurrect forgotten links, cultural practices, and togetherness:

> I think the thing that connects for me, the, kind of summer festival, as it were, Latitude or Glastonbury or Secret Garden Party or any of those music festivals to a kind of much more […] ancient tradition of ritual is a connection to the land that I think we've lost a little bit. And so for me, it was just a lovely opportunity to bring some of those English pagan traditions together with a sense of freedom and release and community.[154]

Aberg's comparison to Secret Garden Party is important because that event works on a 'principle of co-production' between organisers, artists, musicians, and audience-participants, who are known as 'gardeners'.[155] Maybe Aberg's Arden offers something to the inhabitants of the court in the play, but also to the RSC's audience (or cultivates a desired audience): folk festivity effects spontaneity, inclusion, interaction, and alterity, to compensate for the sedate passivity of some contemporary Shakespeare spectating.

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[153] Tashkiran, 'Dance'.
[154] Aberg, interview with Cox.
[155] Roxy Robinson, *Music Festivals and the Politics of Participation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 153, 144.

Given the RSC's claims about the play's 'anarchic' qualities, even if audiences and actors were meant to be 'all in this together', this is hardly conservative or austere: transgressing or suspending existing hierarchies can be emancipatory. Accordingly, this reading of what festivals can do – on or off stage – is entirely consistent with aspects of their history and current forms as manifesting 'a bacchanalian culture of human expression', that could be 'mystical, communitarian and utopian', in ways that resonate with the carnivalesque elements of *As You Like It*: '[F]estivals offer tangible spaces for relative freedom…The rules of society could be bent, or written anew – if only for a short duration'.[156]

Yet one person's 'brief taste of alternative modes of living' is another's 'psychedelic concentration camp'.[157] Moreover, the fantasy of idleness requires the reality of graft: festivals involve 'hard, unpaid or low paid work'.[158] Perhaps introducing a festival vibe to *As You like It* does not conceal but foregrounds the socio-economic tensions the play contains. As Young notes, 'the chequered history of the music festival' has 'enacted […] ancestral tensions […] between commons and private ground'.[159] This echoes what was happening with the internal colonizing and enclosing of the rural landscape in Shakespeare's time too, as a burgeoning empire needed access to timber: 'The greenwood was a useful fantasy; the English forest was serious business'.[160]

Any rendering of a festive folk pastoral reveals ambiguities, then: it can reaffirm hierarchy and deference, while also offering an alternative and critical take on austerity and existing social formations. Arguably, given this, Aberg is too canny a director not to reflexively build in ironizing critiques of the fantastical premises she evokes. As she noted in one interview, Rosalind and Celia 'both reach for clichés' in terms of how they approach the countryside.[161] Aberg subtly deflated the pretension that country life was for everyone. As 'Aliena', Celia's assumed name signified her distinction from this site of rural wellbeing: 'Celia should have something she sits on to protect her clothes from the dirt,[…] perhaps a large handkerchief or a Cath Kidston type cushion'.[162] Rehearsal notes also called for a 'Backpacker's rucksack', 'Camping mat', 'Confetti', and 'Party poppers': 'Celia will be

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[156] Robinson, *Music Festivals*, xi, 21.
[157] Young, *Electric Eden*, 479, 482.
[158] Kate Oakley, 'Better than working for a Living? Skills and Labour in the Festivals Economy', http://www.equalworks.co.uk; cited in Robinson, *Music Festivals*, 151.
[159] Young, *Electric Eden*, 479.
[160] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 153.
[161] Aberg, interview with Cox.
[162] *As You Like It*, RSC rehearsal notes (4 February 2013), n.p.

overladen with belongings'.[163] Overburdened, out-of-place, clattering with the gubbins of yomping to a festival, she had a 'baby wipe moment', as the promptbook put it, as she clung onto the niceties of her former life.[164] Comparably, when the stage came to life with live music in 2.5, this provoked ridiculous dancing from Jaques, who was evidently meant to be letting it all hang out in liberated self-expression, but ended up looking daft (and was seen as such by others). Indeed, the 'Ducdame' song was, characters were told, 'a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle' (2.5.53); following the promptbook direction 'All gather round', everyone was indeed in a circle, and thus, potentially, a bit foolish.

Any internalised self-critique Aberg offers to unsettle any faux-folksy, pastoral communitarianism, was matched by aspects of what Marling did with the music. Certainly, Marling has herself expressed a diffidence about idealising the festival scene. On the one hand, her early experiences of working with like-minded musicians in London, like Mumford and Sons, led her to appreciate the value of music as a way to help a community cohere: 'our music and our playing gigs was just [about] bringing people together'.[165] However, Marling has always carefully curated how this community-making happens, and as a result has confessed that her 'cynical side' finds certain forms of enforced musical community problematic:

> I was having to do a lot of festivals and I dislike them immensely […] the idea of festivals is very contradictive and silly: everyone getting together to form a little community and ruin a perfectly beautiful patch of land for three days.[166]

This urge to conserve the pastoral perhaps informed Marling's desire to query as much as consolidate how we engage with it. In the soundtrack album released to accompany the production, 'Orlando's False Gallop of Verses' (a setting for 3.2) was preluded by accordion, flute, and wordless human voice, all melting into birdsong. This lush bucolia was then juxtaposed with what followed: Orlando trying to make up a sub-Johnny Cash 'stereotypical song' on the hoof ('I'd tow the line'), with 'lyrics that are both clichéd and nonsensical', an incomplete sketch with lots of 'du du du' and 'something something something' echoing the

[163] *As You Like It*, RSC rehearsal notes (9 January 2013 and 24 January 2013), n.p.
[164] *As You Like It*,RSC rehearsal notes (4 February 2013), n.p.
[165] Marling, interview in Rachel, *Isle of Noises*, 536.
[166] *Ibid*., 542.

terrible poetry he writes in the play.[167] Nonetheless, it was part of the 'open-heartedness' and capacity of the 'generous, flexible' Forest of Arden, to accommodate him and his terrible poetry, as indeed the forest does, enveloping the end of his verse in birdsong.[168] In the next, separate soundtrack song, Celia sings lines based upon how Shakespeare depicts Orlando's dire rhyming (in 3.2.132–5), which in Marling's hands, become:

> With Cleopatra's majesty
> And sweet Lucretia's modesty
> Atalanta's better parts
> Helen's face but not her heart
> Oh Rosalinda
> You are so tender.

Matching the augmented deforming of already deformed verse, the music descends to a hammy, hokey, hoe-down, propelled by banjos.

These parodies may or may not harmonise with the pastoral world of the play. But they do create a sense of provisionality, and that nothing here (in Arden, the theatre, or the folk soundtrack) is definitive, finished, or essential. Marling has suggested that when it comes to song-writing and musicianship, irresolution is inevitable because 'not knowing is quite important'.[169] What Afonso hears as a 'work-in-progress dimension' to Orlando's song applies equally to the soundtrack as a whole, whose ending emphasises this shifting, unresolved conditionality.[170] 'Epilogue' features echoes of the wedding song and the opening 'Greenwood Tree', backed by a decidedly non-folk distorted guitar. Then, as if to unsettle matters further, the score actually finishes with 'Under the Greenwood Tree (Alternate Version)': though sharing a name with the song that begins the score, this has a different melody, different chords, different words, and a different – female – singer.

Ending with echoes reprising beginnings could unearth a circularity matching a vision of the pastoral's changing seasons. This lack of definitive resolution, could, moreover, be a consequence of characters' ideas about love's variety itself, and how it can inspire copious expression: when singing Orlando's verses, Celia says 'I'd write you a thousand love songs

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[167] Afonso, *Indie*, 5.
[168] Griffiths, 'Into the Woods', n.p.
[169] Marling, interview in Rachel, *Isle of Noises*, 529.
[170] Afonso, *Indie*, 5.

any day'. Perhaps this irresolution is also to do with the suggestiveness of a play that can be produced – as Aberg did – in ways that merge Hymen and Herne as much as Rosalind and 'Ganymede', and offer a space for a dreadlocked Sir Oliver Martext with stick and spliff to sing a reggae 'Here comes the bride', speak in patois, and invoke 'Jah Rastafari'. It may also, finally, reflect folk's capacity (as much as Arden's) to include or invite new forms and treatments, continuous with while different to what came before. In the words of Oliver, reflecting on the change in character he has endured: ''Twas I; but 'tis not I' (4.3.134).

It would seem, then, that folk Shakespeare in the early 2000s could at once repeat and complicate conservative appropriations and discourses. This reflects the diversity of uses to which folk (and indeed Shakespeare) might be put. In 2009, then London Mayor, the Conservative Boris Johnson announced a 'St George's Day folk celebration in Trafalgar Square', which 'featured English folk music'. On the same day, the likes of Billy Bragg and Martin Carthy staged a counter-event, 'to commemorate the protests for the Tolpuddle Martyrs'.[171] In such conflicts, rather than soundtracking insincere appeals that 'we're all in this together', folk also continues to present an 'oppositional collective ideal'.[172]

> Whether Aberg caught – or was caught in – the contradictions of contemporary uses of folk-music culture, other Shakespearean producers at the time reflected this 'oppositional' aspect of contemporary folk-music culture in other, alternative ways. At first glance, Lucy Bailey's *The Winter's Tale*, staged in the same year as Aberg's production, and also for the RSC, seemed absolutely in-keeping with Aberg's aesthetic. Michelle Morton's programme for Aberg juxtaposed images of contemporary festival culture such as 'Muddy girl dancing at Glastonbury' with 'Molly dancers at Broadstairs folk festival', and a photograph from Sara Hannant's book *Mummers, Maypoles and Milkmaids: A Journey Through the English Ritual Year* (2011). Comparably, the programme for *The Winter's Tale*, also compiled and edited by Morton, included an archival image of the Godley Hill Morris Dancers of Manchester and a description of Wakes Week holidaymakers temporarily escaping industrial life on arriving in Blackpool, from an 1884 edition of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Similarly, Bailey's *Tale* gestured to near-identical contemporary cultural signifiers. In performance, the actors repeatedly translated references to 'sheep-shearing' in 4.3 and 4.4 into 'festival'. And in an attempt to integrate the rustic and the noble, as in *As You*

[171] Morra, *Britishness*, 45–6.
[172] Niven, *Folk Opposition*, 2.

> *Like It*, Florizel was incorporated into the apparently more authentic life of the workers, as he joined in clog dancing (enabled by Perdita who laced his clogs). Accompanied by an accordion, fiddle, spoons, and drum – 'toe-tapping, foot-stomping folk music' – all those celebrating in songs like 'Get you hence' in 4.4 did so in a more communal way than the text seems to license (where only Autolycus, Mopsa and Dorcas sing), but which echoes what Aberg and Marling did.[173] As Bailey put it in the programme: 'We've set Bohemia on the northwest coast of industrial England. These people, workers from the surrounding farms, mills, factories, have practically no leisure. So when they celebrate – wow! – do they celebrate.'[174]

The effect is to suggest every song is part of a shared knowledge or common culture for the characters – as, indeed, 'Get you hence' might have been to the play's first audiences too: it seems likely the song was composed by Robert Johnson during the Jacobean period, as 'an old ballad tune refurbished with setting and lyrics'.[175]

As Aberg did, Bailey turned to a musician – Jon Boden, a solo artist and member of Bellowhead – committed to the expanded folk tradition, whose score was enlivened onstage by Robert Harbron, 'a leading performer and interpreter of English traditional music'.[176] Bailey explained her collaboration with Boden, and her love for Bellowhead, in terms reminiscent of Aberg's description of the connections evoked by Marling's work and festival culture, between a modern, alienated England, and its community-oriented, folk-cultural past:

> They celebrate English folk music unashamedly, and it's that I'm trying to celebrate in Bohemia […] We tend to be ashamed of our folk culture. In fact it's almost non-existent.
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> My son is 17 and adores Bellowhead. He adores Irish folk bands and English folk bands and uses them as actual currency, not as some freak thing. So the popular

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[173] Dan Hutton, 'Review', *Exeunt*, 23 February 2013. http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/the-winters-tale-3; (accessed 23 April 2019).
[174] Lucy Bailey, cited in *The Winter's Tale*, RSC programme, n.p.
[175] John Pitcher, 'Music', in Pitcher (ed.), *The Winter's Tale* (Arden Shakespeare, third series; London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 389–90.
[176] *The Winter's Tale*, RSC programme (2013), n.p.

> appeal now of folk music is encouraging, and that celebration is at the heart of the celebration in Bohemia. Myself and my team are bringing that to the stage.[177]

And yet, though very similar to Aberg's production, subtle differences hint at Bailey's alternate take on the amalgam of Shakespeare and folk. Though a song like 'Get you hence' in the production integrates performers, in Boden's hands it transitions from a major to minor key, ending in discordance. In another telling difference, Bailey's setting was self-consciously historical:

> We're setting the play in the 1860s, conceiving Leontes' court along the lines of the Pre-Raphaelite movement at the time […] a community in flight from the harsh realities of the world, living a romance, but supported by wealth and education. They have created their own Eden […] illusional and delusional.[178]

We might draw a line from John Ruskin to the Pre-Raphaelites to William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, a line underscoring the folk revival beginning at the very end of the 1800s, and animated by the likes of Sharp in the early 1900s. Yet through her 'inversion of the traditional qualities of the pastoral genre', Bailey hints at the inadequacy and limitations of this ideology as offering answers to divided communities.[179] This critique of Eden-making, and this emphasis on the 'actual, real world', where people have to 'set down tools' and withdraw their labour to demand a 'holiday', below 'Leontes' court at the top of an ivory tower', arguably strikes a very different tone from Aberg's production.[180]

Notably, too, this production critiqued the present as well as the past. When Perdita laments that 'To me the difference forges dread' (4.4.17), she is referring to (what she assumes to be) the dangers of the class distinction separating herself and Florizel; but given the way the production problematizes and then overcomes spatial and social polarisation, her words could also be taken to mean any current 'difference' between classes 'forges dread',

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[177] Lucy Bailey, interview with Dan Hutton, 'Lucy Bailey: On folk culture, social division and directing *The Winter's Tale*', *Exeunt* (15 February 2013). http://exeuntmagazine.com/features/lucy-bailey (accessed 23 April 2019).
[178] Bailey, cited in *The Winter's Tale*, RSC programme, n.p.
[179] Callan Davies, '"…Homely Foolery": Lucy Bailey's *The Winter's Tale*', *Tympan and Frisket*, 14 February 2013. https://tympanandfrisket.wordpress.com/2013/02/14/homely-foolery-lucy-baileys-the-winters-tale (accessed 23 April 2019).
[180] Bailey, cited in *The Winter's Tale*, RSC programme, n.p.

fractures a community, leads to violence and resentment, and should be counteracted. This production took place, as Dan Hutton notes, in 'the year in which Britain has been declared the most unequal country in the West'.[181] Hutton suggests Bailey's *Tale* conveys how 'hope for a better, more equal kingdom in the future lies in the younger generation'.[182] Exactly which kingdom – the *Tale*'s Bohemia, or the contemporary 'United' one – remained deliciously unclear. Bailey affirms Shakespeare 'gives us a new dawn', even if our own moment cannot: 'It's a radical thought, even today, that Perdita, with a labourer's accent, should become queen'.[183] To Hutton, this radicalism informed Bailey's treatment of the play:

> Many view the first part of *The Winter's Tale,* set in Sicilia, as the 'political' section, with the Bohemian second part being the more human section. Bailey, however, sees the second half as the one with the more violently radical ideas, demonstrating the power of community and tradition. […] Bailey is angered by the fact that so many of us 'have lost faith in our own roots', and wants to create an anarchic Bohemia rather than a pastoral one.[184]

Radical in the fullest sense, then, in terms of cultivating a progressivism grounded in the suppressed roots of identity and community, this production self-consciously unsettled the construction of modern folk culture, as much by the likes of Bill Tidy's 'Cloggies' cartoons (featured in the programme) as by any Shakespearean production. One instance typified this awareness. In 4.4, Autolycus the ballad-seller left the stage to come back on as a photographer with a camera on a tripod with a hood. He made the clog dancers stand still, orchestrated a pose by shuffling them together, then had them freeze (prompting audience laughter) during the very long wait for the exposure, preserving them for posterity. Despite the comedy, though, there was a profound poignancy too. The audience were witnessing the disruption and falsifying of the dance, and the arresting of the past working-class 'nineteenth-century folk feel' it embodied, in the act of recording (and, with First World War just around the corner, perhaps passing).[185] The fact that the kinds of dancers featured in this production were, a century ago, specifically identified by collectors as embodying the wrong sort of folk

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[181] Hutton, 'Lucy Bailey'.
[182] Hutton, 'Review'.
[183] Bailey, cited in *The Winter's Tale*, RSC programme, n.p.
[184] Hutton, 'Lucy Bailey'.
[185] Boden, interview with Hansen.

culture, only intensifies the problems inherent to collecting: 'generally speaking, the Lancashire Morris dance has come down to us, if at all, in a very degenerate condition, caused, it is said, by the extreme popularity, and urban character of the festivities with which it is usually associated – the Wakes'.[186] Moreover, the production's promptbook noted that a 'clogger faints' at the end of the recommenced dance. This was an uncanny historical rhyming with the costs and exploitation involved in the actual processes of collecting and 'preserving' what is deemed 'folk' culture, as in 'Sharp's "persuasion" of the Kirkby Malzeard sword team that they should undertake the laborious process of dancing for his notation, although it was nine o'clock at night and they were just returning from a day's work in the fields'.[187]

Be Glad For the Song Has No Ending

We can see the significance of the connections explored here because they continue to be made. A 2018 production of *Two Noble Kinsmen*, a play significant for its Morris-dancing scenes in 3.5, was 'set in pastoral "Merrie England" and brought to life with original music composed by Eliza Carthy', the prominent English folk musician.[188] Nancy Kerr, 'one of the most celebrated folk musicians of her time', created 'new settings' of old songs for the Citizen of Stratford event in 2019.[189] Whatever musicians, producers, and audiences have invested in integrating Shakespeare and folk clearly still matters now. One recent example might, finally, point to why, and offer new directions for future integrations and analyses.

In 2016 a folk 'supergroup' called The Company of Players was set up by Jess Distill from the band Said The Maiden, 'featuring […] the very best emerging musicians on the UK folk and acoustic music scene'.[190] The rationale for doing this was explained as follows:

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[186] Iolo Williams, *English Folk-Song and Dance* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1935), 159.
[187] Boyes, *Imagined Village*, 48.
[188] Jonathan Seath, 'Review', in *Mardles*, 2018. https://www.mardles.org/index.php/reviews/live-events/151-two-noble-kinsmen (accessed 23 April 2019).
[189] RSC, 'Award-winning folk singer and songwriter pens new Shakespeare Jubilee songs', 22 May 2019. https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/about-us/news-media/press-releases/nancy-kerr (accessed 20 June 2019).
[190] The Company of Players, 'What We're About', n.d. http://shakespearefolk.blogspot.com/p/what-were-about.html; see also Jess Distill's video for crowdfunding support here: http://www.pledgemusic.com/projects/company-of-players (both accessed 23 April 2019).

> With the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death […] and with Jess' passion for all things Shakespeare, this was the obvious theme to concentrate on throughout the project. So it is that the Company of Players aims to recognise and celebrate one of our greatest literary heroes and icons in the way they know best: through folk music. […] [T]he Company of Players locked themselves away in an old chapel […] to write, rehearse and record a selection of brand new music and songs based on Shakespeare's plays, and on the man himself.[191]

This chapter has sought to explore why combining Shakespeare and folk has proved compelling for so many people. In this regard, this recent collaboration encapsulates concerns explored above. We began by considering the effects of not knowing whose lines were whose in 'Hal-an-Tow' and *As You Like It*; this recent integration has also both helped change perceptions of Shakespeare, and bring new audiences to folk, rejuvenating all involved. As David Harley put it in a review of the album produced by the group:

> If you're among the many people who were completely put off The Bard by unimaginative English lessons, don't let that put you off this take on his life and work. And if you love Shakespeare but are open to alternative 'takes' like *West Side Story* you may well like this.[192]

Perhaps this drive to bring audiences together in new ways is why the group premiered at The Other Place in Stratford-upon-Avon. For this integration of audiences to work, we might conclude that putting Shakespeare and folk together can showcase a fidelity to an older textual or authorial source. Certain Company songs convey this.[193] 'Black Spirits', for example, begins with three female singers harmonising *a cappella* the witches' lines from *Macbeth*; as one of the singers relates: 'Being three of us, I naturally thought "three witches" […] nothing deep and meaningful'. Notwithstanding this humility, the performance is suitably keening, stark, and primal, and made more so by the minor key (verging on atonality). This effort to recreate musically what a text does dramatically also means several

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[191] Company of Players, 'What We're About'.
[192] David Harley, 'The Company of Players', 18 November 2017. https://folking.com/tag/jess-distill (accessed 23 April 2019).
[193] All songs by The Company of Players discussed here can be found on the CD and download, *Shakespeare Songs* (2016), and are also available at http://shakespearefolk.blogspot.com/p/gallery.html (accessed 23 April 2019).

Company of Players songs assume a first-person perspective, as musical-dramatic monologues informed by particular characters, or Shakespeare himself. 'Gather Round', refers to 'the tempest' and seems to be sung from Shakespeare's perspective, as the vocalist asks audiences (of folk or the plays) to reappraise things in detail: 'Think again, look closer, I'll set the scene'. This Shakespeare licenses and invites reinterpretation, which the song manifests. When the voice is a character's, this can consolidate established ways of reading that character, but it can also re-write Shakespeare's works. For example, 'But thinking makes it so' echoes *Hamlet* 2.2, to give voice to 'a young man' who was 'once […] happy all the time' yet now contemplates the arbitrariness of existence for beings 'plucked out of the ether'. However, 'Method in the Madness', while also being a 'song about *Hamlet*' (in Distill's introduction to the performance at the Dacorum Folk Festival in 2016), and while echoing the play lyrically, nonetheless offers 'an alternative story of Hamlet', sung by a young woman, where s/he is 'victorious and kills his enemies'. Certainly, given this reworking the arrangement seems suitably anti-tragic: it is a 'hoe-down' (says Distill), with banjo, fiddle and spoons.

As we have seen, connecting Shakespeare and folk can also work to create connections, communality, commonality, and continuity between performers, audiences, and the world (and often specifically the natural world) around them. The Company of Players' arrangement of 'It was a lover and his lass' from *As You Like It* begins with a single female lead vocalist, eventually joined by the rest of the band and the audience in the 'Hey nonny no' refrain, with the song ending in a harmonised *a cappella* rendering of the line 'When the birds they do sing', a form that seeks to mimic the content of the line and the musicality apparently inherent to a pastoral environment. Finally, then, through this commonality, there can sometimes be a radicalism associated with connecting folk and Shakespeare, centring especially on ideas of national identity. However, Company of Players show that this need not always rely on some reactionary model of 'race'. 'You must needs be strangers' is their version of Thomas More's speech to xenophobic rioters in the eponymous play (ll. 68–152), with the addition (or reworking) of a line where the singers channel More to promise to 'banish you [the xenophobes] to anywhere that isn't England'.[194] This echoes More's petition to his listeners to imagine themselves as exiles, because the song insists that those who seek to exclude and demonise strangers may themselves be excluded and estranged from a place where including diverse others is fundamental. It was a political act to perform and augment

[194] See 'Sir Thomas More: *Passages Attributed to Shakespeare*', in Norton 3, 2159–69.

these lines, a few years after a leading Conservative politician said they wanted to create a 'hostile environment' for migrants, and at the same time as the BBC's Shakespearean programming was criticised by a Conservative MP for pushing 'the Left-wing establishment's pro-immigration agenda'.[195] Through integrating Shakespeare and folk, this performance staked a claim to a different version of Englishness. As Jon Boden reasons: 'maybe it would be easier just to kind of abandon English folk music, but I think that's a really bad idea […] it would fall into the wrong hands'. Instead, he suggests, we should be 'vigilant about […] maintaining a stake in English folk music as a […] progressive, modern, forward-looking musical genre that is based on a historical genre'.[196] We might say something similar about what we do with Shakespeare.

[195] Alan Travis, 'Immigration bill: Theresa May defends plans to create 'hostile environment'' *The Guardian* (10 October 2013): https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/oct/10/immigration-bill-theresa-may-hostile-environment (accessed 18 November 2018); 'Fury as the Bard is dragged into refugee row', *Daily Mail* (24 April 2016), https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3555755/Fury-Bard-dragged-refugee-row-BBC-accused-using-Shakespeare-celebrations-push-Left-wing-pro-immigration-agenda.html (accessed 18 November 2018).
[196] Boden, interview with Hansen.

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