

Gretchen E. Minton

## Ecological Adaptation in Montana: *Timon of Athens* to *Timon of Anaconda*

In this article Gretchen E. Minton describes her adaptation of William Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton's 1606 play *Timon of Athens*. This adaptation, called *Timon of Anaconda*, focuses on the environmental legacy of Butte, Montana, a mining city that grew quickly, flourished, fell into recession, and then found itself labelled the largest Superfund clean-up site in the United States. *Timon of Anaconda* envisions Timon as a wealthy mining mogul whose loss of fortunes and friends echoes the boom-and-bust economy of Butte. The original play's language about the poisoning of nature and the troubled relationship between the human and more-than-human worlds is amplified and adjusted in *Timon of Anaconda* in order to reflect upon ongoing environmental concerns in Montana. Minton explains the ecodramaturgical aims, site-specific locations, and directorial decisions of this adaptation's performances, which took place in September 2019. Gretchen E. Minton is Professor of English at Montana State University, Bozeman. She has edited several early modern plays, including *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Revenger's Tragedy*. She is the dramaturg for Montana Shakespeare in the Parks and Bozeman Actors Theatre, and her directorial projects include *A Doll's House* (2019), *Timon of Anaconda* (2019–20), and *Shakespeare's Walking Story* (2020).

**Key terms:** William Shakespeare, Thomas Middleton, Butte, Anthropocene, ecodramaturgy, mining, mineral extraction.

BUTTE, MONTANA. September, 2019. Under a picnic pavilion at Foreman's Park, an audience sits to witness a play performance adapted from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, now called *Timon of Anaconda*. A 200-foot mining headframe serves as the drama's (un)natural backdrop, and behind the audience a massive hole in the earth created by open-pit mining testifies to a land permanently scarred by the industrial practices of mineral extraction. The titular character, wearing a torn and dirty tank top and without shoes, clutches a piece of bark with some writing upon it. He looks disdainfully at the other characters onstage, who are begging him to return to civilization and help save his city. Timon answers:

Come not to me again, but say to Butte,  
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion  
Upon the gouged verge of toxic flood,  
Who once a day with his embossed froth  
The turbulent surge shall cover; thither come,  
And let my gravestone be your oracle.  
Lips, let sour words go by, and language end:

What is amiss, plague and infection mend.  
Graves only be men's works and death their gain,  
Sun, hide thy beams, Timon hath done his reign.<sup>1</sup>

He walks through the audience, not looking at anyone, and slowly makes his way toward his certain death at the Berkeley Pit – the centre of the largest Superfund site in the US.<sup>2</sup>

As a dramaturg and Shakespearean scholar/editor, I work on Montana-based productions of classical plays that deal with local and current environmental issues.<sup>3</sup> My aims are ecodramaturgical, following Wendy Arons and Teresa May's call to engage in 'theatre and performance making that puts ecological reciprocity and community at the centre of its theatrical and thematic intent'.<sup>4</sup> In 2018 and 2019 I returned to a play I edited over a decade earlier – *Timon of Athens* – endeavouring to explore its ecological insights through adapting, workshopping, and mounting a production of the play in Montana.<sup>5</sup> The two performances of *Timon of*

*Anaconda* in September of 2019 were preceded by extensive outreach efforts, including radio advertising, interviews, and podcasts. This play and adaptation were also the starting point of a graduate seminar I was teaching, called 'Shakespeare and the Natural World'. The performance programme included scene summaries and explanations of the characters, along with an articulation of the adaptation's purpose:

Shakespeare's texts offer a rich storehouse of language, metaphors, and situations that can be adapted to speak to contemporary environmental challenges. This adaptation of *Timon* foregrounds the links between economic and ecological systems in Montana: a state that was first settled by white people because of gold mining, built into an economic powerhouse because of copper mining, and continues to be one of the top coal-producers in the US. *Timon of Anaconda* emphasizes the shared guilt of our impact upon the earth, but also gestures toward possible futures that are dependent upon forgiving faults, even egregious ones that created environmental catastrophe. Theatre is the perfect way to wrestle with difficult problems and to open up paths for further conversation.

*Timon's* thematics and language portray a network of complex economic systems as they are intertwined with broader ecological systems, making it an ideal vehicle for this kind of exploration. The September 2019 *Timon of Anaconda* production reclaimed and revitalized the early modern text, the performance sites, and the community ethos of environmental stewardship.

### Mining *Timon of Athens*

Shakespeare wrote *Timon of Athens* in 1606 in collaboration with his younger contemporary Thomas Middleton. It is one of the lesser-known plays in the Shakespearean canon, perhaps due to its unusual structure and its bent toward allegory. The story centres upon a wealthy, beneficent man named Timon who throws lavish parties and showers his friends with gifts. They all fawn over him, giving him small presents because they know he will give much more expensive ones in return. A cynic named Apemantus watches all of this, refuses to participate, and predicts Timon's fall from Fortune's hill, but no one listens.

Meanwhile, Timon's loyal Steward tries to persuade him to see reason, for this supposedly rich man has been living beyond his means, entirely on credit. When the creditors demand repayment, Timon is sure that he will be able to call upon his friends to assist him, but, of course, they refuse to help. Meanwhile, Timon's other friend, Alcibiades, a military commander, finds the senators of Athens similarly ungrateful when he pleads for clemency on behalf of a soldier who has broken the law. The senate banishes Alcibiades, despite everything he has done to protect the city. Timon is devastated by his friends' betrayal, so he retreats to the wilderness, vowing to live as a beast among the beasts. Digging in the earth to find food, he ironically turns up a mass of buried treasure. From that point on many visit him – some are just passing through (Alcibiades); others preach to him about the errors of his thinking (Apemantus); some attempt to help him (the Steward); but most want to get their hands on his money. Timon declares himself a misanthrope and refuses to see the differences between people. He eventually digs his own grave, carves a scurrilous epitaph, and dies. Alcibiades marches on Athens, but at the last minute relents and decides not to sack the city.

In recent decades, actors playing the title role in *Timon of Athens* have spent much of the second half of the play standing knee- or waist-deep in a pit. Take, for example, Michael Pennington at the Royal Shakespeare Company (1999); Peter Donaldson, Stratford Ontario (2004); Joseph Ziegler, Stratford Ontario (2017); and Glenda Jackson, Royal Shakespeare Company (2018). Crucially, this hole is something that Timon himself has created. Timon the misanthrope says he will bear nothing from the 'detestable town' of Athens (4.1.33), yet somehow he has a spade so that he can dig.<sup>6</sup> What does it mean to turn over the earth – to seek below the surface for food, or for mineral wealth?

Ovid's description of the Ages of Man in his *Metamorphoses* suggests part of the answer. Ovid locates the beginning of human discord in the Iron Age, signalled by the rupture of the earth by both ploughs (agriculture) and spades (mining).<sup>7</sup> Classical and Christian

philosophy equated Pluto, the god of the underworld, with Plutus, the god of riches, identifying money (and the processes of acquiring it) as the root of evil. *Timon* lends itself to an Ovidian – and ecological – perspective whereby the activity of digging up the earth’s mineral wealth unleashes evils that underpin the discord of human societies. As John Jowett argued in his 2004 article ‘Timon and Mining’, the play can be read as participating in an Ovidian-inspired literary tradition that describes ‘humankind’s denatured and violent relationship with the natural world, and with itself’.<sup>8</sup> Shakespeare and Middleton extended this tradition into their own historical moment, alluding to the nascent technologies of copper and coal mining in early modern Europe.

The origin of Timon’s mysterious buried treasure has long puzzled critics and directors alike; often stage productions portray it as a chest of minted coins that are a product of human society. In Trevor Nunn’s 1991 production at the Young Vic, for example, a scene was added in which gunmen bury loot after a robbery, and this is what Timon later digs up. A similar staging provided a backstory for the treasure in Michael Kahn’s production at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington DC (2000). But as Jowett notes, Timon sees mineral gold as a by-product of the earth, like the roots, and the poetics of Acts 4 and 5 suggest that the treasure is not money, but raw ore.

The strongest ecological reading of *Timon* must also take full measure of the play’s recurrent allusions to alchemy. References to base metal (3.1.46, 3.3.6), coining (2.1.6), the philosopher’s stone (2.2.110), and alchemical transformation (5.1.112) all point toward the significance of this motif in *Timon*.<sup>9</sup> In this play alchemy becomes not the magic of philosophers, but the bitter, mundane practice of usury. In a philosophy that extends from Aristotle to Marx and beyond, usury is the process whereby that which is inherently sterile (money) is made to reproduce, and such unnatural fecundity generates monstrous offspring. The dream of turning base metals into gold has been realized many times over in the modern era – not just the literal minting of gold, of course, but the myriad ways in which

the resources of the earth are transmuted into wealth for those who extract, refine, and sell them. Such ‘alchemical’ creation on an industrial scale has resulted in poisonous by-products that cannot be returned to their elemental forms.

The language of alchemy in the original play thus offers a precedent for *Timon of Anaconda*’s reflections upon the modern equivalencies of such philosophies. Although Butte is the focus of *Timon of Anaconda*, my adaptation does not merely replay the horrors of this history but seeks to articulate the network of human and non-human systems that have both created this history and had an impact on it. Mining in Butte, as elsewhere, was accompanied by a false faith in human cleverness and technological wizardry to rush, break open, and exploit the ‘secret’ and slow processes of nature to serve anthropocentric ambitions and greed.

### **Butte/Anaconda: The Environmental Legacy**

The city of Butte, in south-west Montana, was dubbed ‘the richest hill on earth’ in the late nineteenth century because of its immense deposits of ore, especially copper, but also zinc, manganese, and silver. After years of digging tunnels to excavate the ore, the powerful Anaconda Copper Mining Company turned to open-pit mining in the mid-1950s. When the resources dried up and Anaconda moved its operations to South America, the mine was run by ARCO, until it was shut down in 1982 (appropriately, or ironically, on Earth Day). The Berkeley Pit measures 7,000 feet in length by 5,600 feet in width (Figure 1).

When the mining operation was discontinued, the pumps stopped running, and subsequently the pit filled with groundwater and rain that created a highly toxic lake, laden with arsenic, zinc, and sulfuric acid, at a depth of 1,780 feet. The pit, along with a stretch of the Deer Lodge Valley in which Butte is located, is the largest EPA Superfund Site in the US. The sobering fact is that no one knows how to clean up the damage, and soon the pit’s water is predicted to contaminate the Silver Bow Creek and thus the entire water table.<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 1.** The Berkeley Pit in Butte, Montana. Photo: Heather Minton.

Meanwhile, the impact of the toxins on wild-life is startlingly apparent; several times flocks of snow geese have landed on this artificial lake and died, their white feathers stained by the red-orange acidic liquid that they mistook for life-sustaining water.<sup>11</sup>

The boom-and-bust economy of Butte, as well as its record of environmental catastrophe, have made it the subject of many documentaries, environmental studies, and books.<sup>12</sup> But while it is all too easy to point fingers at Butte, and to use this place as an object lesson about errors of the past, such

narratives are over-simplified and ultimately unhelpful when considering the effectiveness of ecodramaturgy for making a difference in our world. Timothy LeCain makes a similar point in his *Mass Destruction: The Men and Giant Mines that Wired America and Scarred the Planet*, which offers an instructive look at Butte's history from an enviro-technological point of view. He argues that 'we should resist a too facile framing of Butte's environmental history as merely a morality play on the evils of early twentieth-century corporate capitalism' because 'such a simple declensionist tale

tends to obscure other important aspects of the story that offer more useful lessons for understanding the human relationship to the environment'.<sup>13</sup> The story that needs to be told, according to LeCain, 'is one of arrogant overconfidence more than deliberate malice, of difficult trade-offs more than moral absolutes, about shared guilt rather than convenient scapegoats'.<sup>14</sup> As a literary work that frustrates simple dichotomies as well as simple answers, *Timon of Athens* offers abundant opportunities for exploring the alternate narratives LeCain calls for. Even the play's resistance to traditional tragic expectations and the unevenness of its structure seem to demand new languages of analysis.

In his first chapter LeCain evokes an article by the environmental historian William Cronon titled 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature'. LeCain refers to this work because one goal of his own book 'is to examine ways in which we might instead find our way back to something more like the "right nature", to a concept of nature that more clearly includes humans and their technologies in its definition'.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, the phrase 'right nature' also occurs in *Timon*. Complaining that he has turned up gold rather than roots, Timon talks back to his environment:

Come, damned earth,  
Thou common whore of mankind that puts odds  
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee  
Do thy *right nature*.

(4.3.42–5, my emphasis)

What is the 'right nature' of the earth? In Timon's view late in the play, the land should provide food (even if that makes Mother Earth a whore), for the presence of mineral wealth is somehow 'unnatural'. Such a distinction, however, is inherently faulty, since ore, too, is a 'natural' part of the earth, even though it is not alive in the biological sense.

Timon's error, both before and after his fall, is a failure to accept the inevitable interconnectedness of human, economic, and ecological systems. In Timon's attempt to escape to the wilderness and live like a beast among the beasts, he finds not food but gold, not animals but a stream of human visitors. Such heavy-

handed irony underscores William Cronon's point about 'wilderness' being a human invention. He contends that this faulty term refuses to acknowledge a crucial fact: there is no such thing as an earth devoid of human influence.<sup>16</sup> This is especially true in the Anthropocene, but as we have become increasingly aware, the human footprint on ecosystems goes back millennia, even to evidence of ancient copper smelting preserved in the Arctic ice.<sup>17</sup> Timon's behaviour in the second half of the play can be characterized as anti-human exceptionalism, but this extreme is fraught with as many problems as the endless bounty he professes in the first half of the play. As Apemantus aptly says regarding Timon's failure to appreciate the golden mean: 'The middle of humanity thou never knewst, but the extremity of both ends' (4.3.300–1).

It is more than a little daunting to stand at the edge of the Berkeley Pit and contemplate its expanse, and, similarly, to visit the state park at the Washoe smelter in the neighbouring town of Anaconda. The smelter is 585 feet tall and was built in 1918 in an early attempt to pump mining by-products such as arsenic higher into the atmosphere so that they did not kill the cattle. In the 1950s, there were advertisements pronouncing that Berkeley Pit epitomizes 'America the Bountiful', encouraging visitors to marvel at what technology is making possible for the modern way of life.<sup>18</sup> Now, however, the viewing points at Berkeley Pit and Washoe State Park provide visitors with interpretive information about history, technology, and environmental impact. Brian James Leech calls this 'toxic tourism', which involves going to poisoned places in order to better understand (and perhaps later prevent) such events.<sup>19</sup> As inheritors of this pit, we can see, with LeCain, that 'the pits of mass destruction are the embodiment of a human cultural, economic, and technological relationship with nature gone badly awry'.<sup>20</sup>

Many moments in Butte's history could testify to this story of a relationship gone badly awry, and I was originally attracted to the early twentieth century for my adaptation because of the boom of the Anaconda

Company, the rhetoric about 'the richest hill on earth', and the labour riots brought on by dangerous working conditions. This is undoubtedly the period in Butte's history that receives the most attention. However, considering the full, visible impact of mining, it was more effective to move the time period later, because it facilitates a meditation upon the ways in which Butte's scarred landscape remains 'an enduring physical manifestation of the tremendous powers and the tragic limitations of the modern ideologies, societies, and economies that created them'.<sup>21</sup>

*Timon of Anaconda* is thus set in the period roughly from the late 1960s to the early 1980s.<sup>22</sup> The scale of open-pit mining changed everything in Butte, most significantly the pace of environmental impact and the rate at which the neighbourhoods were destroyed to accommodate an ever-increasing area for mining. At the same time, this era gave rise to the environmental movement, which did in fact inspire Butte citizens to fight against the continued destruction wrought by the mining companies. In order to capture the historical significance of these developments, *Timon of Anaconda's* scenes touch upon Berkeley Pit's excavation and shutting down, the demise of the Anaconda Company, the collapse of Butte's economy, labour riots, a string of arson fires that left Butte reeling, and the shutting off of Berkeley Pit's pumps.

### Adapting *Timon's* Ecological Dimensions

For several decades it has been commonly observed that *Timon of Athens*, despite its allegorical structure, is a strikingly contemporary play. Credit economy and economic collapse are generally what people have in mind when they say this, but looking at the play's environmental ethos demonstrates how clearly *Timon* speaks to our Anthropocene selves.

Early modern writers often anthropomorphized the earth in order to articulate the pain that it (she) feels when her resources are extracted, giving voice to the damage that humans inflict through mining. Because the language *Timon of Athens* echoes these concerns, the Anaconda adaptation focuses not only on the wider environmental impact of

mining, but also on the dark logic whereby the pits we create by extraction become another way of digging our own graves. *Timon of Anaconda's* moment of extracting treasure indicates the supposed wealth within the rock: the green copper veins that are not in fact 'Yellow, glittering, precious gold' (4.3.26) but nonetheless represent the highest ambition of those who made their livings, and sometimes their fortunes, from an economy that valued this metal above all else from the moment that electricity required efficient conductors.

*Timon of Athens* consistently associates its titular character with 'bounty' that is magical in its scope and magnitude; in a sense, Timon replaces Mother Earth by continually providing plenitude which others are only too happy to exploit.<sup>23</sup> Those around him ravenously consume his bounty, treating him as they treat their earth – with unbridled greed and consumption of resources. One of Timon's friends later admits that he has 'often of [Timon's] open bounty tasted' (5.1.56), and multiple references to cannibalism illustrate the monstrous implications of such consumption. The cannibalism metaphor resonates with the history of Butte, for the Anaconda Company's mining operation is frequently described as having 'gobbled up' an entire town, first by digging thousands of miles of tunnel beneath its surface, then by mobilizing massive machines that turned 'the richest hill on earth' into a pit. Butte communities such as the Italian neighbourhood of Meaderville were swallowed by the perpetual expansion of the Berkeley Pit.<sup>24</sup> This adaptation of *Timon* is able to trace how the bounty of the earth, when exploited for capitalist gain, creates endless hunger that ultimately results in the consumption of entire towns, landscapes, ecosystems.

Consumption, however, cannot simply be labelled as unnatural: after all, consuming nature's air, food, and water is fundamental to survival for all species. Such a basic lesson somehow eludes Timon of Athens when he declares himself a misanthrope and retreats to the woods. By stripping himself of his clothing and vowing to live like the beasts, he seeks a purer existence. Yet his meditations in Acts

4 and 5 show his dawning awareness that each beast is subject to another beast, that the cycles of predation, fear, and consumption permeate all of nature (4.3.326–44). This is an important lesson for Timon: he cannot escape from the natural ecological cycles that do in fact depend upon *use*.

By the same token, Timon comes to realize that life itself requires borrowing (or stealing) from the earth's bounty, and thus he tells the thieves that it is possible to live off of the birds, beasts, and fishes (4.3.419). The thieves, however, symbolize the stark reality of 'men that much do want' (4.3.410): we cannot satisfy ourselves merely on basic animal provisions, for modern society's 'needs' have become dependent upon so much more. In the current century the human appetite for electronics and other conveniences ensures that mining for copper, molybdenum, and other metals will not slow down.<sup>25</sup> *Timon of Anaconda's* ending echoes the foregone conclusion of continued extraction when the senators assure Alcibiades that all the workers will continue to 'make their labour in our town' until everyone has his 'full desire'.<sup>26</sup>

This Anaconda adaptation provides a model for using the play's language to explore the material and ideological roots of our crises. The idea of 'roots' is essential here, not just because it is an acknowledgement of the traditional idea that money is the root of all evil, but because roots are the organic counterpart to metals. Timon of Anaconda had been a copper king, but the digging he does later in the play is a desperate attempt to recover the life-giving roots that could provide another type of sustenance. What is underground is brought above the surface by humans for our use, and this alchemy is our legacy.

### The Production: Setting and Sites

In order to make this adaptation of *Timon* viable for short performances and workshops, the Shakespeare/Middleton text was cut to about 75 minutes' running time in a version that can be performed by seven actors.<sup>27</sup> The language is still mostly the original, although the place names and some character names were altered in order to make the Montana

setting clearer. References to Athens and Athenians were changed to Anaconda (when referring to the mining corporation) or to Butte/Montana (when referring to the city or larger region). In addition to substantially trimming characters and scenes, the script re-ordered the scenes in which visitors approach Timon in Acts 4 and 5, and changed some lines in the text, especially towards the end of the play (discussed below).

The production's fundamental aim was to immerse the story in particular outdoor spaces that were not so much 'natural' as post-industrial, thereby contextualizing the adaptation's references to human impact upon both the human and the non-human worlds. The site for the Butte performance was Foreman's Park at the Mountain Con Mine Yard. The landmark mining headframe that marks this location bears the slogan 'Mile High, Mile Deep' – the remnant of a mine yard that operated for nearly sixty years and then sat abandoned for thirty years before being opened as a remediated public park in 2012.<sup>28</sup> From this site one can see the Berkeley Pit, dozens of headframes, historic uptown Butte, and the rich (in every sense of the word) lands on which these human structures have been built (Figure 2).

Like *Timon of Anaconda* as an artistic work, this Butte park is a site of mining reclamation. It provides a place for public gatherings amongst walking and biking trails through newly planted native grasses but, at the same time, it acknowledges the mining history of the area, with its interpretive signs explaining the complex legacy of its topography. The *Timon of Anaconda* performance was near the crumbled foundation of an actual mining foreman's home and in the shadow of the iconic headframe. When the play referred to the opulence of Butte, the actors were able to gesture towards the early-twentieth-century homes of its heyday, many of which still stand in a historic district visible from Foreman's Park. More striking was the expansive presence, impossible to ignore, of the Berkeley Pit. In many ways this pit seems like a graveyard – a chasm of death, a reminder of the forgotten past. Yet before the Butte performance of *Timon of Anaconda*, several actors



**Figure 2.** Headframes at the Mountain Con Mine Yard in Butte, Montana. Photo: Kevin Brustuen.

and audience members walked on the trails above Foreman's Park, where excavators still run in the Continental Pit, extracting silver, copper, zinc, and molybdenum. This experience was an awakening for those who assumed that the mining impact, though extensive, does not continue. One audience member recognized how she was implicated in this proximity:

The echoes of the hatred towards all mankind, high and low, still ring in my head thinking about the Butte performance of *Timon of Anaconda*. . . . The setting of this adaption shed light on Butte's super-fund site catastrophe, quite literally with no room to distance yourself, as an audience member, from the horrifying reality of environmental crisis.<sup>29</sup>

The Bozeman performance took place at the dilapidated Story Mill silos and was therefore further removed from the adaptation's language in terms of direct Butte references. Nevertheless, the post-industrial site allowed for evocative connections to related histories (Figure 3). The Story Mill grain terminal was

constructed in 1882, the largest elevator in Montana at that time and a powerful economic force in the region. The land on which these buildings sit is rich in history, since it is a wildlife corridor, while archaeological evidence attests to over 5,000 years of human habitation. The Story Mill ceased operating in the late 1960s, but it remains an iconic structure in north-east Bozeman. The city has recently opened the large Story Mill Park next to these silos, dedicated to the revitalization of the industrial site for use by the community, along with a restoration of wetlands to enhance the animal population. The grain terminal itself was purchased by an individual who opened it for arts events that benefit the community at large, including this production of *Timon of Anaconda*.<sup>30</sup>

Mountain Con Mine Yard and Story Mill evoke material reminders of the many factors involved in telling an environmental history, echoing the adaptation's concern with the human and non-human costs of industrialization, but also the possibilities of restoration





**Figure 3.** The Story Mill silos in Bozeman, Montana. Photo: Kevin Brustuen.

and continued stewardship. An audience member at Story Mill reflected on what it meant to be embedded in this history:

Driving to the site on Saturday, I was intrigued by the juxtaposition of trees, willows, birds, sky, and a gentle air with the towering concrete and metal structures looming over the site. Humans built the silos and in the process destroyed the wetlands. Sitting on my chair during the performance, I heard the play's dialogue through the occasional sounds of car and air traffic while my left foot occasionally nudged an empty, plastic Coke bottle. I want to think that I am immune to such environmental issues as the Berkeley Pit, or plastic floating in the Pacific Ocean, or any myriad of ecological issues in play as I sat at the Silos. . . . How silly of me. I am a *we*. I am part of a community, I share space and environment with others, and I have a responsibility to the Earth *now*.<sup>31</sup>

In both locations we employed a white canvas backdrop behind which actors exited and changed costumes. When Timon retreated to the wilderness, however, the orientation of the play's action shifted 90 degrees. At Story Mill

the audience began by facing the remains of a wooden framework over an old set of railroad tracks, but then turned to face the massive silos. The silos had open doors, and inside were piled various pieces of scrap wood and metal. It was into one of these that Timon retreated to his 'cave'. At Mountain Con, the 90-degree turn allowed the audience to focus more explicitly on the gigantic mining headframe. What was once a proud statement about the expansive wealth of these mineral deposits at the Continental Divide – 'Mile High/Mile Deep' – took on a new significance amid the play's language. When Timon spoke of 'smoke and lukewarm water', 'reeking villainy', and 'infinite malady' (3.7.88–97), the physical location seemed to speak as well – this time of water tables, aquifers, and a perpetual clean-up site submerged beneath this piece of ground.

As Mark Kuntz performed *Timon*, his booming voice, especially in his speeches of misanthropic rage, reverberated off the silos in Bozeman and the hills in Butte. This lent power and a resounding sense of awe to his

tragedy. The sound also enhanced audience reflection upon the landscapes: the hill that was turned into a pit to extract minerals in Butte; and, in Bozeman, the enormous height of a grain storage that was necessary for the settlement of a valley that has become one of the fastest growing areas in the USA. Reflecting upon the impact of the sound at Story Mill, one observer wrote:

The most striking effect of the silo, though, was the ethereal echo that it gave to Timon's voice, both strengthening it through the amplification of the acoustics, and emphasizing the smallness of Timon in the greater world hearing his actual voice at the core of that great echo. It also made me feel a certain hollowness, whether it represented the womb of Mother Earth, a hollow space in Timon's soul, a cave, a mine, all, some or none of those.<sup>32</sup>

### The Production: Characters

In this adaptation of the Shakespeare/Middleton play, Timon is re-imagined as a mining mogul from the Anaconda Copper Company. At the outset, Timon has a naïve belief that all segments of Butte's society are fundamentally connected in positive ways, but his attempts to sever human connection in the second half of the play demonstrate that one cannot escape from economic, social, or environmental webs. In his self-declared misanthropy, he voices a position of anti-human exceptionalism that sees people as a cancer of the planet that must be removed so that nature can thrive. However, as he digs for food and turns up gold, he also creates another pit, which demonstrates the inevitable impact that humans have on their environment and re-states the question about the 'right nature' of that relationship. His ironic invitation to the senators to hang themselves from a nearby tree that his 'own use invites [him] to cut down' (5.2.91) highlights the deadly end of exploitation. Even Timon's last act of carving an epitaph requires the destruction of a tree.

At the outset of the performance Timon was dressed in a blue corduroy jacket, a bolo tie, and cowboy boots, reflecting the 1960s and 1970s setting in the American West. Timon stripped these clothes off when he left

civilization, as he does in the Shakespeare/Middleton original, seeing them as part of the corrupt urban society that he desires to escape. An audience member remarked that 'Kuntz bore sadness and disgust that evolved into cynicism as his undershirt became increasingly dirty and torn, a physical reminder of his new place in society: alongside the earth'.<sup>33</sup> Yet when he was in the 'wilderness', Timon still used the tools of civilization: his spade and pickaxe aided his desperate digging for roots, until he pulled out a large, almost grotesque-looking piece of ginger. The 'gold' that he unearthed came in the form of green-tinted rocks, suggesting the copper veins of mineral-rich earth (Figure 4). These rocks of various sizes became important props, symbolizing the greed that develops around an economic system based on extractive industry, most notably when the thieves scrambled on the ground for small rocks, desperate for their share of 'the richest hill on earth'.

Timon's false friends Lucullus, Lucius, and Ventidius (in the original) became characters named Daly, Clark, and Heinze in this adaptation because their names recall the most famous 'copper kings' of Butte's early history.<sup>34</sup> Despite their names, however, two of these friends were played as female characters, exuding flattery and sexual charm as they received gifts such as a fur and a pearl necklace from Timon. In terms of the society of Butte, the 'senators' of the play are the mining moguls of the Anaconda Company and are thus nearly indistinguishable from Daly, Clark, and Heinze.<sup>35</sup> The same three actors played the false friends, the senators, the servants to Timon's creditors (called 'goons' in the adaptation), the thieves who come to steal Timon's wealth in the wilderness, and two loyal servants to Timon.

Costumes were simple and flexible to allow for quick changes between characters: a base layer of black for the goons was accessorized by blue baseball caps (the servants); dresses and sports coats (the false friends); and trench coats and jewels (the senators). This use of doubling heightened the allegorical nature of the play, for the repetitive and artificial presentation of scenes with these characters made it clear that the point of these exchanges was

not to convey verisimilitude but to provide a satirical commentary on this shallow society.<sup>36</sup> Against these flattened, allegorical figures, the performance focused ultimately on four characters (Timon, Alcibiades, Apemantus, Steward) in order to tell the central story of *Timon of Anaconda*, because they represent different approaches to human/non-human relations in the light of the grievous impact of the Anthropocene.

Alcibiades is a notoriously difficult character to portray in *Timon of Athens* because the subplot regarding his rebellion seems undeveloped, and his motivations and sincerity with respect to Timon's plight are ultimately unclear. Such conflicting loyalties became, in *Timon of Anaconda*, the basis for the development of Alcibiades as a mining foreman. He carried a hard hat and was dressed in miner's clothes, which made the difference between him and the rest of Timon's circle patently obvious. References to Alcibiades as a Captain in the original play were changed to 'Foreman' in the adaptation. This simple shift

highlighted the idea that Alcibiades' primary concern was not with war, but with working in the earth.

At the same time, the class distinction between the flattering friends and this character was underlined by the disdainful way that they greeted the Foreman at their gatherings. Apemantus' opening speech about how 'all kinds of natures . . . labour on the bosom of this sphere / To propagate their states' (1.1.66–7) emphasized the central importance of labour to Butte's economy across all classes. Although Alcibiades showed signs of appreciation at being part of Timon's circle, his loyalties clearly lay with Butte's rank-and-file miners. His friend who gets into trouble with the law was a union organizer, and when the senate refused to pardon this man for his crimes, Alcibiades used the opportunity to organize his own violent workers' strike, threatening the physical and economic safety of Butte.

*Timon of Anaconda* showed Alcibiades as a man driven by a well-meaning crusade on



**Figure 4.** Mark Kuntz as Timon, finding a rock laden with ore. Photo: Kevin Brustuen.

behalf of the workers. However, this anthropocentric crusade failed to recognize the impact of war and the workforce on the environment.<sup>37</sup> Alcibiades, in this adaptation, was too short-sighted to see that the environment created by unbridled capitalism and exploitation of natural resources would shortly cause the collapse of Butte's economic and ecological systems.

The cynic Apemantus in *Timon of Athens* is an outspoken critic of flattery and hypocrisy, and this main character trait is carried over into *Timon of Anaconda*. In this version, he was, in fact, given the first lines of the play (adapted from the lines of the Poet in the original), in which he addressed the audience, holding up the Arden edition of *Timon of Athens* and saying that he has written this work about a man who sits high on Fortune's hill and then is cast down. He thus served as a storyteller, especially early in the play – an aspect of his character reinforced during the performance by the use of tableaux in the first two scenes: Timon and his flatterers froze several times in the midst of a toast or gift-giving so that Apemantus could deliver his cynical commentary to the audience.

However, there are limits to Apemantus' philosophy in both the original play and the adaptation. His stance tends to be arrogant and judgemental; although he brags that he does not need human society, he cannot seem to keep himself from coming to the city and telling its dwellers the errors of their ways. In *Timon of Anaconda* Apemantus was envisioned as a Montana woodsman who spent most of his time living off the land as if he were an old-time mountain man. His desire to live in accordance with nature seemed commendable at the beginning of the performance, but his rants were sometimes suggestive of self-righteous environmentalism. Furthermore, although he made some effort to help Timon, Apemantus was ultimately a libertarian who preferred to keep to himself: he had no interest in integrating human and non-human reciprocity into larger communities.

Along with the other servant characters (called Frankie and Josef in this adaptation), the Steward represents the central possibility of hope in *Timon of Anaconda*.<sup>38</sup> Given the time

period of the adaptation and the gender swap of the Steward in this production, resemblances to the conservationist Rachel Carson informed the character portrayal. This character was in every sense of the word a steward, taking care of both human and non-human environments. She not only portrayed genuine concern for her master throughout, but also had the greatest ecological sensibility, allowing her to become the central focus of morality and hope in this production.

Dressed in denim and a vest, the Steward subtly matched the colour palette of Timon (both wore light blue), yet she inhabited a completely different world from the materially obsessed visitors to Timon's house. In order to emphasize her understanding of true sustainability, she did not offer Timon or her fellow servants money (as is indicated in the original), but offered fresh produce, which she pulled from a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) bag. The servants Frankie and Josef recalled the polyglot workers of Butte's history: they were boyish in their mannerisms but devoted workers who voiced outrage at those who betrayed Timon. They learned to solemnly follow the Steward's commitment to a more sustainable human and natural community.

Any environmentally placed production needs to take account of both the human *and* the non-human world. The language of *Timon of Athens* provides an instructive starting point for such an examination. The word 'dog' occurs seventeen times in the original play.<sup>39</sup> It is frequently a term of invective and usually used by Apemantus or in reference to him. As the etymology of their name suggests, cynics were associated with dogs in Ancient Greece, for they sought to live in accordance with nature, but they also had a tendency to 'bark' at humans, pointing out their errors. By elevating animals above humans, cynics professed freedom from the bonds of desire and acquisition that plagued human society.

A historical dog from Butte is an integral part of *Timon of Anaconda*. This stray dog lived near Berkeley Pit from at least 1986 until 2003. He was nicknamed 'The Auditor' by the miners, who sometimes fed him, because he would show up unexpectedly and then



**Figure 5.** Riley O'Toole as Apemantus with 'The Auditor' dog. Photo: Kevin Brustuen.

disappear again. His fur was hideously dread-locked and, at one point, a sample of it was sent to a lab for analysis, which revealed that the dog's fur contained elevated levels of many toxins, including 128 times the normal level of arsenic.<sup>40</sup> The Auditor has become a sort of mascot of Butte, a testimony that it is possible to survive in difficult conditions, as the city has. For others, the misshapen dog is an emblem of environmental degradation. Disconcertingly, his ashes were sprinkled over the Granite Mountain Memorial Outlook, which commemorates the 168 men who died in a mining fire in 1917. The Auditor thus seems simultaneously to represent Butte's proud history, the interlinking of human and animal worlds, and the monstrous outcome of our unbridled use of the earth's resources.

In the *Timon of Anaconda* performance the dog originally belonged to Apemantus, but eventually stayed with Timon in his pit. The use of a real dog as 'The Auditor' reinforced bestial language in the script and also

ultimately helped to underline Apemantus' shortcomings as a detached and self-righteous environmentalist (Figure 5). He was pleased to sit among humans, brandish his canteen, and smugly smile at the hypocrisy of Anaconda/Butte. However, when Apemantus met Timon in the wilderness, 'The Auditor' ultimately chose the misanthrope because it was he who better understood, and lived, the interdependence of all living systems.

### Reclaiming the Tragic Ending

*Timon of Athens* stands in an uncertain position in the Shakespearean canon for many reasons, not the least of which is that it seems to defy audience expectations with regard to genre. Much of its tone is satirical. The First Folio announces it as the 'Life' of Timon of Athens, and yet the second half of the play, in particular, seems to pull it in the direction of tragedy. As a tragedy, though, the play is ultimately unsatisfying: the titular character dies as an unrepentant misanthrope, offstage,

of unexplained causes, leaving behind two somewhat contradictory epitaphs. Such loose ends in the original play, however, become opportunities to re-imagine an alternative to tragedy, not just for this play, but for a planet in peril.

*Timon of Anaconda's* main character dies offstage, as he does in the original, after cursing and uttering the nihilistic-sounding philosophy that 'nothing brings me all things' (5.2.73). Although the production did not explicitly depict a cause of Timon's death, we talked about a likely scenario in which he ingested a poisonous root. On a practical level, he did not possess the skills to live off the land like Apemantus. But on a metaphorical level, as he sought for the 'right nature' which can sustain life, perhaps he was fated to eat a root that grew in soil poisoned by the by-products of the mining industry that once made him rich.

The most extensive script changes in the adaptation occurred in the final scene, after Timon's exit. This scene takes place on the outskirts of Butte, in what was once an amusement park called Columbia Gardens.<sup>41</sup> This park caught fire in 1973, and shortly thereafter was swallowed by the ever-expanding appetite of Berkeley Pit. The citizens of Butte suspected the Anaconda Company of deliberately setting the fire, and because the residents especially valued Columbia Gardens, this was a breaking point in the company's ability to hold on to economic power over the city. This warlike struggle was echoed in the adaptation as Alcibiades marched angrily into this devastated area, threatening the once-powerful senators not only with a labour strike, but with complete destruction. As in the original play, the senators begged him to change his mind and not sack the city. In this adaptation, however, Alcibiades' acquiescence to the senators' demands was portrayed explicitly as a capitulation (he signed a contract they pulled out of a briefcase) not because he sought personal gain, but because he was focused on putting his men back to work, unconcerned about any wider impact made by the mining industry.

At this moment, the Steward came with news of Timon's death and handed the

epitaph to him – a piece of tree bark with words written upon it. However, the Foreman did not show any great interest in Timon's passing. He read the epitaph's words ('*Here lie I, Timon, who alive all living men did hate, / Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here thy gait*', 5.5.70–1), but then distractedly discarded the piece of bark, focusing on his deal with the senators whom he followed back to the city. In this devastated landscape, the Steward reflected upon the horrible resting place for her master, gesturing to the Berkeley Pit when saying, 'Dead, then. And this his grave' (5.4.5). She picked up the epitaph again and read the part of it that Alcibiades ignored – a message that gives a much more ecological reading of his death: '*Timon is dead, who hath outstretched his span, / Some beast read this, there does not live a man.*'<sup>42</sup>

In *Timon of Athens*, when Alcibiades hears of Timon's death, he says:

Though thou abhorred'st in us our human griefs,  
Scorned'st our brains' flow and those our droplets which  
From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit  
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye  
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven.  
(5.5.73–7)

These lines were used as the final speech of *Timon of Anaconda*, this time spoken by the Steward in a slightly altered version:

Though he abhorred in us our human griefs,  
Scorned our brains' flow and those our droplets  
which  
From frugal nature fall, yet rich conceit  
Taught him to make the rising water weep  
On his low grave, on faults forgiven.

Shakespeare's figure of weeping Neptune to describe Timon's seaside grave suggests an agency in nature that is able to rebuke yet mourn for the humans who have injured it, and ultimately to reclaim them. In order to make this point stronger in the adaptation, the script's reference to 'rising water' emphasized the continued and increasing problem of the sludge that cannot be held back by dams indefinitely. It also globalizes this local catastrophe within the rising waters of the planet,

thereby making Timon an Anthropocene Everyman.

After delivering this speech, the Steward was joined by Frankie and Josef, who hugged her in a spirit of sorrow and loss. She signalled to these young people that they must now clean up the wreckage. Dead geese props had been pre-set, alluding clearly to the multiple incidents of snow geese dying when they landed on the pit. But there was also garbage on the ground, some that was pre-set, but some that was a by-product of the audience that came to watch a performance in an outdoor location. Frankie and Josef cleaned up pieces of trash along with the geese, then returned to the Steward. At that moment, the dog came onstage, alone. When the Steward and other servants reached out to touch the monstrous dog, they accepted the offspring of the Anthropocene as part of moving toward a sustainable future.<sup>43</sup>

This ending was not meant to be naïvely redemptive, but to suggest that we all contain the toxic by-products of industrial mining, and thus all share not only the guilt but also the solutions. The Steward and his fellow servants were poised to consider a new way of operating in this world, one that takes full measure of our earth from a position that resists the destructive anthropocentrism of the past. By ending with the Steward and this tone, *Timon of Anaconda* emphasized the shared guilt of Butte's past, but also gestured towards possible futures that require forgiving faults, even egregious ones that created environmental catastrophe. Reflecting upon this ending, one observer wrote:

The flocks of birds who landed on the toxic waters were poisoned and left for man to gather and dispose of. As Frankie and Josef walk the perimeter of the stage for the final scene of *Timon of Anaconda* the audience begins to feel the pit left by the death of Timon fill. The reality of Berkeley Pit and the effects of copper processing still scar that land reaching out from the pavilion where we sat, but we sat as a community. A community considering *what now* together.<sup>44</sup>

As this comment shows, the tragic dimensions of this adaptation served as a catharsis for the community ('weep[ing] for aye') in a

spirit of collective affective acknowledgement and mourning which is the transformative ethos for Anthropocene humans to live more respectfully and responsibly with the non-human world.

As a town, Butte has limped along in recent decades, but lately it has shown not only resilience but also vitality, for the citizens have found ways to celebrate the rich and diverse communities of people who have lived in this area. Indeed, the importance of reclamation is not only about Butte's ecological systems but also about cultural ones. An annual folk festival now attracts thousands of visitors who appreciate the healing potential of music.<sup>45</sup> The Imagine Butte Resource Centre brings together diverse creative projects in the visual arts,<sup>46</sup> and a programme called Butte Elevated strives to enhance the quality of life in Butte, pointing out that 'Our community offers residents access to thousands of acres of pristine wilderness, spectacular mountain views, affordable living, quality schools, extraordinarily clean water, and an unparalleled quality of life'.<sup>47</sup> Such initiatives refuse to turn Butte into a graveyard. And even within Berkeley Pit's lake, unexpected life forms emerge: extremophiles that can exist in acidic environments.<sup>48</sup> Scientists are studying these microbes because they produce compounds that might be used as antibiotics and even as cancer treatments.<sup>49</sup> From opposite ends of the spectrum, the arts programmes and the extremophiles provide evidence that life, in fact, does continue. *Timon of Anaconda* reflects the spirit of reclamation that is found in Butte, resisting the tragic ending of a man who literally digs his own grave.

## Conclusion(s)

When I first worked on *Timon of Athens*, I often thought of Michelangelo's unfinished sculptures that have come to be known as 'The Prisoners'. Initially I used this metaphor because of the play's 'messy', unfinished, and collaborative nature, equating its rough edges with these bodies that are in the process of coming out of marble, but remain incomplete. Revisiting the play to create *Timon of*

*Anaconda*, however, I began to see that the Prisoners are also a symbol of our embeddedness in the material world. Like Timon, and like so many of us, the Prisoners seem to desire to escape from their material trappings, but are unable to free themselves.<sup>50</sup>

In one of the striking photos in his 'Anthropocene' catalogue, Edward Burtynsky shows the excavation of a massive wall of marble in Italy – the necessary industrial extraction for the building blocks of statues. As the artist comments more broadly: 'What this civilization leaves in the wake of its progress may be the opened and emptied earth, but in performing these incursions we also participate in the unwitting creation of gigantic monuments to our way of life.'<sup>51</sup>

Burtynsky leads me to conclude with one more anecdote about Butte – a monument in the form of a 90-foot statue of the Virgin Mary called *Our Lady of the Rockies* that stands above the town on the continental divide. This statue was built from 1979 to 1985 in honour of mothers everywhere. The fundraising for and construction of this monument was meant to become a symbol of Butte's need to heal its broken economy and environment. The fully lit ethereal statue glows every night and is intended to cast a benevolent eye over the citizens of Butte. Yet every human monument comes at an environmental cost. The erection of *Our Lady of the Rockies* required blowing up a rock formation called Saddle Rock, bulldozing a road to the top of a mountain, building a 425-tonne concrete base, and employing National Guard helicopters to lift the Virgin Mary on to this pedestal.<sup>52</sup>

This ironic continuation of the mindset that caused the environmental problems in the first place shows that Butte, like so many other locations around the globe, stands as a monument to human ambition and its grave costs. Nonetheless, a focus on the material remains, while reflecting upon Timon's ecological dimensions, generates a place for further discussion. As one audience member in Butte wrote:

Perhaps the hyperreal aspect reminds us that, whether in Elizabethan England or Butte, Montana,

it is the undisturbed earth that precedes either performance or capitalism, and once overturned and stripped of ore, it will never be the same, and our only, small hope is to map a restorative, global relationship with the earth.<sup>53</sup>

The mapping necessary for such restoration requires a look at the aerial photos of areas such as the Berkeley Pit – a zooming out, as Burtynsky's huge images do, in order to understand the full scope of the damage and our place within it. Such views are enabled by standing at the Granite Mountain Overlook in Butte, and by standing in four-hundred-year-old plays as well.

*Timon of Anaconda* could well speak again in Butte and beyond, adapted to other communities and ecosystems ravaged by the mining industry. There is no shortage of these places on our planet. The reverberation of Timon's voice in such sites creates a space for reflection and a new space for rebuilding communities on the other side of the toxic flood.<sup>54</sup>

## Notes and References

1. This quotation is from *Timon of Athens* (5.2.99–108), with some script alterations, including a place-name change from 'Athens' to 'Butte' and an adjustment of the line 'beached verge of the salt flood' to 'gouged verge of toxic flood'. Quotations from *Timon of Athens* are from the Arden 3 edition, ed. Anthony B. Dawson and Gretchen E. Minton (London: Cengage, 2008).

2. Superfund sites are polluted locations in the United States requiring a long-term response to clean up hazardous material contaminations.

3. I helped to develop the 2017 Montana Shakespeare in the Parks' production of *Macbeth*, which was set in a future Montana that had suffered a climate-change-induced environmental and societal catastrophe. In the fall of 2019, I was similarly the dramaturg for the Bozeman Actors Theatre performance of Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, which dealt with water contamination and the distrust of scientific evidence in a way that made connections to contemporary Montana.

4. *Readings in Performance and Ecology*, ed. Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 4.

5. I created five substantially different versions of *Timon of Anaconda*. The first was read and workshopped with seven actors in December 2018. The second went through a similar process with a different group of eight people (a mixture of actors, professors – including an ecologist – and students) in January 2019. The third version was read and commented on by a Butte citizen. The fourth version became the basis for the performance that took place in Bozeman and Butte on 7 and 8 September 2019. The fifth reflects the script changes that took place over the course of rehearsal and performance.



6. Although no stage direction indicates a spade, Ape-mantus asks Timon, 'Why this spade, this place . . .' (4.3.203). In the Lucian source-text, the spade is explicitly called for.

7. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955), lines 127f.

8. John Jowett, 'Timon and Mining', *SEDERI*, XIV (2004), p. 77–92 (p. 77).

9. David Bergeron's article 'Alchemy and *Timon of Athens*', *CLA Journal*, 13.4 (1970), p. 364–73, discusses the importance of this motif, but not in connection with ecological themes (beyond general references to the 'green world').

10. Silver Bow Creek is a headwater stream of the Clark Fork River, the largest river by volume in Montana, which is connected to the Columbia River watershed. Montana legislators recently approved the extensions of the 750-foot dam that holds back the toxic sludge, which does not solve but delays the full-scale water contamination. See Kathleen McLaughlin, 'A once-powerful Montana mining town warily awaits final cleanup of its toxic past', *Washington Post*, 10 February 2020.

11. In 1995 at least 340 migrating snow geese were killed when they landed in the Berkeley Pit, but this scenario repeats on a lesser scale nearly every year. See: <<http://www.pitwatch.org/snow-geese-update/>>. A particularly large flock was decimated in 2016. See: <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/12/07/montana-snow-geese-searching-for-pond-land-in-toxic-mine-pit-thousands-die/?noirect=>>>.

12. See especially the 2008 PBS documentary *Butte, America: The Saga of a Hard Rock Mining Town*, dir. Pamela Roberts. Other environmental histories of Butte include: Edwin Dodd, 'Pennies from Hell: In Montana, the Bill for America's Copper Comes Due' (*Harper's Magazine*, 1 October 1996); Timothy J. LeCain, *Mass Destruction: The Men and Giant Mines that Wired America and Scarred the Planet* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009); and Brian James Leech, *The City that Ate Itself: Butte, Montana and Its Expanding Berkeley Pit* (Reno; Las Vegas: University of Nevada, 2018).

13. LeCain, *Mass Destruction*, p. 18.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

16. See William Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), p. 69–90.

17. See Sungmin Hong, Jean-Pierre Candelone, Clair C. Patterson, and Claude F. Boutron, 'History of Ancient Copper Smelting Pollution During Roman and Medieval Times Recorded in Greenland Ice', *Science*, 272, Issue 5259 (12 April 1996), p. 246–9.

18. The Anaconda Company ran an advertisement in 1957 with a picture of Berkeley Pit and text that read: 'This summer, plan also to see America the BOUNTIFUL. Visit Butte, Montana – "The Richest Hill on Earth" – and see how the Anaconda Company mines the metals so essential to the nation's economic strength' (see LeCain, *Mass Destruction*, p. 189). Leech similarly reprints a 1960 advertisement from the *Anaconda Company Trailsmen* that is headlined 'Berkeley Pit / One of Montana's Most Spectacular Sights' (Leech, *The City that Ate Itself*, p. 141).

19. Leech, *The City that Ate Itself*, p. 344.

20. LeCain, *Mass Destruction*, p. 22.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Nevertheless, the adaptation does not adhere to a strict historical moment, for different parts of the play provide parallels to different decades of Butte's history.

23. See *Timon of Athens*, 1.1.6f., for the initial language about Timon's bounty. The foundational article on this aspect of the play is Coppélia Kahn, "'Magic of Bounty': *Timon of Athens*, Jacobean Patronage, and Maternal Power', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XXXVIII, Issue 1 (1987), p. 34–57.

24. The Anaconda Copper Company offered money to the residents to either sell their property or move their houses elsewhere, and also resorted to bribery. Articles about the Pit's expansion and the collateral disappearance of Butte's neighbourhood invariably describe this as 'swallowing' or 'gobbling'. See: <<http://www.pitwatch.org/berkeley-pit-history/>>.

25. Laurie Shannon points out that what distinguishes humans is that they 'need' what they don't 'need', and that this is ultimately what separates them from beasts: Shannon, 'Poor, Bare, Forked: Animal Happiness and the Zoographic Critique of Humanity', in her *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolitanism in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 127–73.

26. *Timon of Athens*, 5.5.52–4 (with the word 'harbour' in the original changed to 'labour' in the adaptation's script).

27. The script is 13,000 words long, including detailed stage directions.

28. Foreman's Park was the result of a collaboration between the EPA, ARCO, and Butte-Silver Bow County.

29. Courtney Mahoney, response to *Timon of Anaconda* (September 2019).

30. Another arts event at Story Mill silos preceded *Timon* by less than two weeks. Called 'Standby Snow: Chronicles of a Heatwave', this intertextual work brought together video, architecture, music, and live performance to activate this rich and complex location, rife with historical narratives and environmental lessons.

31. Kara Lapp, response to *Timon of Anaconda* (September 2019).

32. Eliese Besemer, response to *Timon of Anaconda* (September 2019). That combination of amplification and smallness recalls Bruno Latour's point about the Anthropocene: the planet is too narrow and limited for human ambitions of globalization; at the same time it is too big, too complex, to remain within the bounds of any human endeavour requiring control. 'We are all overwhelmed twice: by what is too big, and what is too small': Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), p. 16.

33. Annie Marshall, response to *Timon of Anaconda* (September 2019).

34. Marcus Daly established the Anaconda Copper Company in the 1880s; William Clark made his fortune through mining copper, building smelters, and investing in electric power companies, newspapers, and railroads; Augustus Heinze established the Union Copper Company in 1902, but his power was more short-lived in Butte.

35. References to the senate could suggest the Montana/US government as well. Mining mogul William Clark attempted (and failed) to bribe his way into the US senate in 1899, but did serve one term, between 1901 and 1907.

36. The most satirical scenes in *Timon of Athens* (e.g. 1.2 and most of Act 3) were written by Middleton, who was well-known for his scathing depictions of urban vice in other early seventeenth-century plays.

37. Industrial Workers of the World organizer Frank Little (1897–1917) came from an earlier period in Butte's

history, but his biography is suggestive. Even though he is often seen as a labour rights hero, the work Little did inadvertently furthered the practices that would cause the environmental catastrophe to come.

38. Todd A. Borlik observes that *Timon of Athens* is 'a literary homily on the virtues of stewardship and economy': 'Teaching *Timon of Walden*,' in *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern English Texts*, ed. Jennifer Munroe, Edward J. Geisweidt, and Lynne Bruckner (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2015), p. 169–79 (p. 175).

39. This amounts to more references to dogs than in any other Shakespearean play save *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (which features an actual dog) and *Timon's* close cousin *King Lear*, which has the same number of references.

40. See: <<http://www.ohmidog.com/2010/11/02/surviving-butte-the-story-of-the-auditor/>>.

41. Mining mogul William Clark in fact gave Columbia Gardens to the people of Butte in 1899 (presumably as part of his bid for a US senate seat).

42. *Timon of Athens* includes two epitaphs that seem somewhat contradictory (see the Arden 3 edition, p. 100–9), but they became integral in this adaptation to the need to read on and re-interpret the messages we attach to death. The script of *Timon of Anaconda* slightly altered the first epitaph from the original, which reads: 'Dead, sure, and this his grave.'

43. The dog we used in this role was named Gracie, so there was a coincidental dimension added to the moment in which the Steward seemed to be calling out to 'grace' in this final scene.

44. Nicole Jarrett, response to *Timon of Anaconda* (September 2019).

45. The Folk Festival is one of many hosted in Butte. 'In recent years, Butte has become known as Montana's "Festival City" due to the numerous events held in the city.' See: <<https://co.silverbow.mt.us/490/Events-Festivals>>.

46. See: <<https://www.ibrc.me/>>.

47. See: <<https://butteelevated.com/>>.

48. Scientists have also recently found that the water boatman insect lives in the Pit, as do algae that ingest iron.

49. See: <<http://www.mtpr.org/post/extremophiles-berkeley-pits-silver-lining>>.

50. Some art historians suggest that perhaps Michelangelo deliberately left the statues incomplete to highlight this eternal struggle of humans to be free of their material surroundings. Timothy Morton writes that the constant assertion that humans are 'embedded' in a life-world is, paradoxically, a 'symptom of drastic separation': *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 8.

51. Edward Burzynsky, *Anthropocene* (Art Gallery of Ontario, 2018).

52. This base required 1,200 sacks of concrete and 8,000 gallons of water. See: <[https://mtstandard.com/news/local/our-lady-of-the-rockies-timeline/article\\_a7bd8c9e-9541-56b3-998c-ff59896930aa.html](https://mtstandard.com/news/local/our-lady-of-the-rockies-timeline/article_a7bd8c9e-9541-56b3-998c-ff59896930aa.html)>.

53. Megan Vorse, response to *Timon of Anaconda* (September 2019).

54. For making this production and article possible, I wish to thank: the cast and crew of *Timon of Anaconda*; the students in my graduate seminar 'Shakespeare and the Natural World'; Montana State University's Office of Research, Economic Development, and Graduate Education; and Kevin Brustuen.