

“If I should tell / My history”
*Memory, Trauma, and Testimony in
 Pericles and Hamlet*

In 1608, George Wilkins published his *Painfull Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre*, a prose account of the play that he co-authored with Shakespeare, *Pericles*. Wilkins includes a gut-wrenching scene in his story: King Antiochus’s rape of his daughter. He narrates her failed attempts to stop her father’s attack, and then depicts her inability to tell anyone what he did to her. Wilkins writes: “for wordes, she had not one to utter, for betwixt her hearts intent, and tongues utterance, there lay such a pile of lamentable cogitations, that she had no leisure to make up any of them into wordes.”¹ Her father has reduced her thoughts to rubble and rendered her speechless. When her nurse enters and sees her weeping, the daughter’s words utterly fail her. Finally, “loath to be the bellowes of her owne shame, and blushing more to rehearse than her Father was to commit,” the girl “sate sighing, and continued silent” (12).

The Painfull Adventures (hereafter *PA*) was marketed on its title page as “The true History of the Play of *Pericles*, as it was lately presented,” and yet none of the play’s quartos, from the 1609 Q1 forward, includes even a hint of Wilkins’s excruciating account of the rape. Rather, they dismiss the daughter from the start as a girl who is complicit in her father’s incestuous lust. If, as scholars generally agree, Wilkins wrote the play’s opening scenes in Antioch, what happened to his more sympathetic “true History” of her assault? Was it described or enacted in the play as it was first performed, and then cut out of the printed version? Gary Taylor and MacDonald Jackson, editors of the 1986 Oxford *Pericles*, speculate that Wilkins’s *PA* is a reported version of the play, and hence a legitimate account of it. They believed in *PA*’s relevance to such an extent that they incorporated significant parts of Wilkins’s prose version into their edition of the play. And yet they chose not to bring in his graphic account of Antiochus’s violations against his daughter and the post-traumatic state of her “lamentable cogitations.”

This persistent erasure of Antiochus’s daughter’s story, even in Jackson and Taylor’s ambitious edition, is a reminder of how difficult it is for some histories to be heard and recorded. I begin with her rape and its aftermath because it lays out – in no uncertain terms – what is at stake in remembering or burying them. In part of what follows, I will be importing Wilkins’s account of Antiochus’s daughter into the drama of *Pericles*, not in the spirit of reconstruction that informs the Oxford edition, but in order to expose the effects of suppressing difficult histories and silencing the girls who try to speak and distribute them.² Wilkins’s depiction exposes the physical and cognitive damage that such violence wreaks, as trauma materially works its effects on and through the body-mind. It also provides an excruciating account of how barriers to voicing traumatic histories are erected, especially when they implicate people in positions of power. It is a rare victim in Shakespeare’s day (and, unfortunately, ours) who can tell such histories unimpeded and unimpeached. When Shakespeare’s most violated heroine, *Titus Andronicus*’s Lavinia, finally manages to communicate her rape at the hands of the Emperor’s stepsons, she must do so by writing legalistic Latin in the sand using a staff that her uncle has put in her mouth.³ Even a girl as privileged as the fourteen-year-old Princess Elizabeth was unable to testify in full about the repeated sexual advances of her stepmother Catherine Parr’s new husband, Thomas Seymour.⁴

In the previous chapter, I touched on how Miranda’s memory waxes as her father’s old one wanes, a detail that illuminates one of the ways in which early modern girls’ brainwork distinguished itself when it underwent the change of fourteen years. In what follows, I focus on the perceived abilities of this adolescent memory. What could it retain that other people’s could not? Whom and what could their memories affect as they stored up, brought forth, and potentially transformed personal and shared histories that others have buried? Evelyn Tribble and Nicholas Keene explore individual and collective memory in the early modern period through the theoretical lenses of distributed cognition and the extended mind. These models insist that traditional boundaries between an individual’s mental processes and their physical and cultural environments be redrawn to reflect their dynamic interrelationship and to accommodate different historically situated systems: “Cognitive ecologies are always dynamic – as one element changes, others may take up the slack, so to speak.”⁵ With early modern England’s rapidly shifting social and religious systems, the faculty of memory was increasingly tasked with the job of navigating these new cognitive ecologies. Complementing Tribble and Keene’s work, John Sutton describes the “deep-seated and recurrent

worries concerning control of the personal and shared past" that extended from the Reformation to the Restoration in particular – anxieties that "required stratagems to discipline the fluid brain as much as to impose narrative structure on uncertain events."⁶

I argue here that girls were tasked with taking up the slack when it came to remembering and negotiating certain shared histories in early modern England's changing cognitive ecology. They were precisely the kind of "smart things" to which Sutton argues early moderns' "spongy, embodied brains" sought to hook up in their quest for cognitive discipline, ethical subjectivity, and meaning.⁷ At the same time, girls' memories are regularly featured as competitive sites in which men (and some women) looking to control particular stories attempt to shape what and how girls remember them – and whether or not they recollect and distribute them. The two plays that I focus on negotiate different kinds of traumatic, suppressed histories and expose the ethical and structural fault lines that erupt when dramatic narratives fail to account for them. In both *Pericles* and *Hamlet* the eponymous characters are men whose tortured personal histories are inextricably tied to the present and future health of the subjects and countries they represent. Their lapses into melancholia and potential madness, in part precipitated by their damaged pasts, dramatize the potentially unstable relationship between the brain and both the individual and collective memories that early moderns relied upon as they sought to impose order on uncertain events. *Pericles* and *Hamlet* also each feature an adolescent girl, Marina and Ophelia respectively, whose memory preserves these familial and national histories while infusing them with her individual emotions and experiences. The girls' brainwork fails to conform to the needs of the men who rely upon them to remember their stories, bury others, and absolve them of their sins. In both cases, the girls display a unique kind of mnemonic control as they recollect the past, even as they exhibit the kind of fluid cognition that connected and extended early modern brains and body-minds to other people and communities, allowing them to give voice to silenced individuals and populations.

In *Pericles*, the fourteen-year-old Marina's memory is a central feature of the play's explorations of ethical governance and unkingly acts. By remembering her own story and recalling that of the tale's original victim, Antiochus's daughter, Marina partially amends the failures of memory upon which the play's structure depends. Although it cannot save Antiochus's daughter, I argue that Marina's memory salvages some of the raped girl's broken cogitations from which *Pericles*, along with most *Pericles* scholars and editors, runs. In this way, I push back against

conventional readings of Marina as a sacred enabler of her father, Pericles, and of her future husband, Lysimachus – an innocent vehicle whose “own most clear remembrance,” as her father describes it, restores the family unit and absolves it from the play’s history of incest and rape (22.32).⁸

In the second part of this chapter, I focus on Ophelia, the Shakespearean girl best remembered over the centuries for her distracted mental state. What have we missed by letting the spectacle of Ophelia’s apparent madness divert us from the recollections of Denmark’s traumatic past that she persistently speaks? What can Ophelia remember that others cannot or will not? Here I argue that Ophelia’s brainwork recovers the recent history of the play-world, but also remembers and distributes the shared histories of English Catholics officially silenced under the Tudor state. Through her songs and speech, she invokes the figure of the female Catholic novice, a type of girl who was no longer active on her native soil when Shakespeare and his contemporaries were writing. While these girls were still training and worshipping on the Continent, they were not a part of English people’s authorized, day-to-day spiritual lives and practices. In the absence of these females who were committing themselves to the salvation of their Christian communities through prayer and remembrance, to whom could early modern English subjects turn for such self-sacrificial spiritual services? I believe there is more than just anger and innuendo to Hamlet’s demand of Ophelia that all of his sins be “remembered” in her prayers and that she get herself to a nunnery (3.1.92, 122). At the same time, her memory, like Marina’s, refuses at key moments to comply with the needs and commands of the men who would impose their own needy narrative structures upon it.

“Evils are no evils, if not thought upon”

Versions of the ancient tale of *Apollonius of Tyre* existed in multiple forms prior to its early seventeenth-century incarnation as a play. The most important of these sources for Wilkins and Shakespeare’s *Pericles* were Book 8 of John Gower’s fourteenth-century narrative poem, *Confessio Amantis*, and Laurence Twine’s sixteenth-century prose romance, *The Pattern of Painful Adventures*. The daughter of King Antiochus is the first adolescent girl to appear in all versions of the story, but she receives an especially quick and condemnatory treatment at the start of *Pericles*. Gower, rising from his medieval ashes to serve as the play’s Chorus, tells the audience that she was “[s]o buxom, blithe, and full of face / As heav’n had lent her all his grace, / With whom the father liking took, / And her to

incest did provoke" (1.23–26). Her filled-out face and figure mark the daughter as a girl who has seen the change of fourteen years. But her adolescence has no room in which to flourish: she moves from being a "[b]ad child" to a "sinful dame" in the space of a few lines because of her alleged welcoming of her father's incestuous desires (1.27, 31).

As I have begun to discuss, Wilkins initially depicts Antiochus's daughter (unnamed in all of the sources) as an innocent casualty of her father's rape in his prose account of the play. In this, he was following Twine's and Gower's leads.⁹ Nevertheless, Maureen Quilligan considers the eventual association of Antiochus's daughter with her father's sin, in *Pericles* the play and its sources, as evidence of a generally unsympathetic pre-modern attitude toward female incest victims. She argues that our "twenty-first-century sensibilities do not allow us to blame someone who is clearly a victim, but we differ from the Renaissance in this."¹⁰ It seems to me, however, that the painful details Wilkins imagines of the daughter's destroyed body-mind, despair, and total inability to convey her plight complicate Quilligan's assertion of difference between our time's sensibilities and his. Given his hand in writing the play *Pericles*, and his claim that *PA* presents the "true History" of that play as it was presented, we should consider Wilkins's account as part and parcel of his and Shakespeare's production of the tale; and we should leave open the possibility that his sympathetic portrayal of the girl's post-traumatic state is not a cultural outlier, but rather one that has undergone its own suppression, potentially in his own time and certainly in ours. It did not make it into the printed quartos of the play, but it did make it into print.

In his more recent study of *Pericles*, MacDonald Jackson argues that "[i]n writing his novelized account of the play Wilkins appears, like the quarto reporters, to have relied on recollection – of what he had seen on stage, of what he himself had written, and conceivably glimpses of Shakespeare's script." Jackson articulates the few facts about *Pericles* that critics can agree on: it is a play-text whose origins are hopelessly inaccessible, and that is riddled with potential failures of memory. These are evident in its multiple metrical deficiencies, defects in sense, unclear authorship, and the chicken-and-egg problem of which came first, *PA* or *Q1*.¹¹ Even so, he argues, "a 'true history of the play' compiled by the author of the first two acts would obviously have extra credibility as a witness to the dramatic script as staged."¹² Jackson's word choice is deeply ironic here given that his and Taylor's reconstructed Oxford edition mute the play-world's most significant witness to its origin story, Antiochus's daughter.

At the start of *PA*, Wilkins writes that the girl is “growing to like ripeness of age,” and that this change attracts a host of suitors (9). It also attracts her father, who proceeds to tell her that she is powerless to resist his will: “[H]e was her father, whome shee was bound to obey, he was a King that had power to commaund, he was in love, and his love was resistlesse, and if resistlesse, therefore pittillesse, either to youth, blood, or beauty: In briefe, he was a tyrant and would execute his will” (10–11). The King’s logic conveys the long reach of this toxic family affair, as he wields his worldly authority here as ruler and tyrant in the service of his immoral paternal desires. Even so, the daughter does not give in, but rather questions her “unkingly father”:

These wordes . . . made the schoole of his daughters thoughts, (wherein were never taught such evils) to wonder at the strangenesse, as understanding them not, and at last, to demaund of her unkingly father, what hee meant by this, when he forgetting the feare of heaven, love to his childe, or reputation amongst men; though by her withstoode with prayers and teares, (while the power of weaknesse could withstand) throwing away all regard of his owne honesty, hee unloosed the knotte of her virginity, and so left this weeping branch to wyther by the stocke that brought her forth. (11)

The father fails to remember the rules of God, kinship, and society that encourage and support civilized, ethical behaviors. Meanwhile, his daughter’s thoughts and questions signal her full cognitive engagement. She asks him what he means and “wonder[s]” at his “strangenesse,” but this latter activity, so hopeful at the end of *The Tempest* when circulating through Miranda’s wondering fourteen-year-old brain, promises no generative seeds of knowledge here. Instead, the daughter is reduced to a withered branch. As the painful episode progresses, the reader witnesses the damage that her father’s rape has wrought on her entire body-mind:

[S]o fast came the wet from the sentinells of her ransackt cittie, that it is improper to say they dropped and rayned downe teares, but rather, that with great flouds they powred out water. It is beyond imagination to thinke whether her eyes had power to receive her sorrowes brine so fast as her heart did send it to them. In briefe, they were nowe no more to be called eyes, for griefes water had blinded them: and for wordes, she had not one to utter, for betwixt her hearts intent, and tongues utterance, there lay such a pile of lamentable cogitations, that she had no leisure to make up any of them into wordes . . . (11–12)

Wilkins begins this extended depiction of violation and grief with the grand metaphor of a ransacked city, but quickly abandons such distancing

rhetorical devices. The psychophysiological damage wrought by her father is relentlessly and materially rendered: her sorrows move through her body, from her heart to her eyes, where the sheer flood of her tears blinds her. Her despair is so intense, so isolating, Wilkins suggests, that her embodied brain cannot hook up with anyone or anything outside of it: her condition is "beyond imagination." Wilkins's description of her thoughts lying in a jumbled pile of cogitations, trapped between her heart and tongue, graphically figures this state of full body-mind destruction. No brainwork can put her thoughts together again and "make up any of them into wordes" for others to understand. When her nurse enters and asks why she sits so sorrowfully, the daughter delivers a cryptic response: "Oh my beloved Nurse, answered the Lady, even now two noble names were lost within this Chamber, the name of both a Father, and a Child." In Twine's version, the nurse is able to perceive the full story from the girl's riddle; Gower's nurse also discerns what has happened.¹³ Wilkins's nurse is unique, then, in that she understands neither the girl's words nor her plight. She urges her to speak "more plaine," but she, "loath to be the bellowes of her owne shame, and blushing more to rehearse than her Father was to commit, sate sighing, and continued silent" (12).

After she attempts and fails to convey to the nurse what has happened to her, Antiochus returns. Finding her "as full of wette, as winter is," he commands the nurse to leave and then proceeds to ply his daughter with arguments that hinge on forgetting what he has done, and silencing those who would remember and testify to it: "[H]e beganne to perswade her, that actions past are not to be redeemed, that whats in secret done, is no sinne, since the concealement excuses it, that evills are no evills, if not thought upon, and that himselfe her Father had that power to gag all mouthes from speaking, if it were knowen" (13). His powers as king and father intertwine to keep all of his subjects' cogitations unheard, broken, or both. Better to conceal or not remember "actions past," he argues, for they only are evil if you think upon them. And should anyone dare to speak of them, he would not hesitate to gag their mouths.

"He's more secure to keep it shut than shown"

Pericles suppresses the traumatic effects of Antiochus's unkingly acts on his daughter by rewriting her rape as a complicit pleasure. As a result, she and her story become nothing more than the inconvenient truth that initiates the play's action. Pericles has come to the city of Antioch to solve the riddle that will win him the prize of the King's daughter. The text of the

riddle enacts this manipulation of the daughter's voice by ventriloquizing her, while conveying none of *PA*'s sympathy toward her broken cogitations and ransacked body-mind: "I am no viper, yet I feed / On mother's flesh which did me breed. / I sought a husband, in which labour / I found that kindness in a father" (1.107–10). Although Pericles does not speak the solution, he clearly understands the meaning: the King is sleeping with his daughter. But since the answer to the riddle is the incestuous truth that the King has vowed to gag should it get out, Pericles runs back to his kingdom of Tyre, not staying to face what he assumes will be his certain execution. Pericles begins the play, then, as a prince who chooses to remain silent rather than expose a country's and a family's rotten history. Once he discovers the answer, and realizes his perilous situation, he tells Antiochus: "Who has a book of all that monarchs do, / He's more secure to keep it shut than shown" (1.137–38). "Kings are earth's gods," he continues, "in vice their law's their will, / And if Jove stray, who dares say Jove doth ill?" (1.146–47). The problem with Pericles's logic is that he, like Antiochus, is the ruler of his kingdom. His moral relativism, even though it is a rhetorical gesture employed here to save his head, is deeply troubling to hear from the mouth of a political leader.

Once back in his kingdom, Pericles frames his decision to stay silent in terms of his subjects' safety. His body, suffering from "dull-eyed melancholy," shows the effects of his unspoken fears for his people over how far Antiochus's power may reach:

Then it is thus: the passions of the mind,
That have their first conception by misdread,
Have after-nourishment and life by care,
And what was first but fear what might be done
Grows elder now, and cares it be not done.
And so with me. The great Antiochus,
'Gainst whom I am too little to contend,
Since he's so great can make his will his act,
Will think me speaking though I swear to silence,
Nor boots it me to say I honour him
If he suspect I may dishonour him. (2.2, 11–21)

Pericles worries that Antiochus will assume he is revealing his dishonour abroad, and attack Tyre:

Our men be vanquished ere they do resist,
And subjects punished that ne'er thought offence,
Which care of them, not pity of myself,
Who am no more but as the tops of trees

Which fence the roots they grow by and defend them,
Makes both my body pine and soul to languish,
And punish that before that he would punish. (2.27–33)

The sentiment seems kingly here, but the state of his body-mind suggests weakness in Tyre's leader. His fear has conceived "the passions of the mind" that now spread throughout his body and soul, leaving both to languish. And although he claims that his melancholy springs from care for his subjects and not pity for himself, his initial concern that he is "too little" to contend with Antiochus is framed in terms of an individual plight: "And so with me." The Oxford edition underscores the dangers of this melancholic, self-centered withdrawal by adapting and inserting some of Wilkins's prose account here in which his counselor Helicanus strongly criticizes Pericles for the damage he is doing to his people: "You do not well so to abuse yourself, / To waste your body here with pining sorrow, / Upon whose safety doth depend the lives / And the prosperity of a whole kingdom" (2.37–40). (In Q1, his criticism is more muted: he advises Pericles to "bear with patience / Such griefs as you do lay upon yourself.")

And then there is the ethically thorny, though pragmatic decision to keep Antiochus's incestuous secret undisclosed. Pericles sees the King as a man who can turn his will into action, something which *PA* describes in excruciating detail in its portrayal of the daughter's rape. In the play, there is no concern for her in Pericles's abdication of his own will to the tyrant's and in his sworn silence: his focus is on his own fear that Antiochus will think Pericles dishonours him. Her trauma appears irrelevant to the story of international conflict that Pericles rightly anticipates will unfold. The question is: Will the ensuing narrative accommodate the silencing and containment of her history in the service of great men's stories?

Once Pericles reveals Antiochus's incestuous secret to Helicanus, his counselor advises him to "go travel for a while" until the King's anger is "forgot," or until the tyrant dies (2.111–13). It is a risky plan, given that both men acknowledge the possibility that Antiochus may well wage war in Pericles's absence, leaving Tyre's subjects to "mingle [their] bloods together in the earth" (2.118). In the process of sparing his own body, Pericles potentially sacrifices theirs. At best, this is a gamble; at worst, an act of unkingly misgovernment. At the end of the play, Pericles will describe how he was "frighted from my country," but at this point he frames his departure as the act of a prudent and "true prince" (2.23; 2.129). His subjects, left in the dark as to Pericles's reasons for leaving, will in fact complain to Helicanus about his prolonged absence and demand

"our free election." Kingdoms without a head, remarks one Lord, "Like goodly buildings left without a roof, / Soon fall to utter ruin" (8.32, 35–36).

But Gower, serving as the play's Chorus, encourages its audience to see the good in Pericles's actions – at least those that immediately follow his departure from Tyre. Pericles lands in Tarsus and saves its governor Cleon's subjects from starvation, and Gower invites the viewer to compare this "better prince" to the evil King Antiochus: "Here have you seen a mighty king / His child, iwis, to incest bring; / A better prince and benign lord / Prove awe-full both in deed and word" (5.1–4). Gower describes how the people of Tarsus honor Pericles with a statue "to remember what he does" and "make him glorious" (5.13–14). This act of remembrance, however, is built by strangers to commemorate a brief moment in Pericles's very recent history. The ensuing Dumb Show brings the arrival of news from Helicanus of a hit man sent by Antiochus to Tyre – a reminder of the rotten past from which Pericles has been running and which now sends him off to sea yet again.

Next, Pericles experiences a shipwreck and washes up on the shores of Pentapolis, a physical trauma that he expresses as a profound loss of memory: "What I have been, I have forgot to know, / But what I am, want teaches me to think on: / A man thronged up with cold" (5.106–8). He is only able to remember more than his immediate physical discomfort after the fishermen who find him also find his father's armor: "it was mine own, part of my heritage / Which my dead father did bequeath to me" (5.158–59). Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass argue that this moment is symptomatic of aristocratic memory's reliance on a fantasy of enduring, inherited objects: "Without the support of his material memory systems," they suggest, Pericles "has no identity."¹⁴ Their analysis is especially helpful for thinking through why Pericles has such an unstable body-mind and diminished sense of himself when left on his own, especially when he must negotiate traumatic events and sort out his position in relation to them. As he struggles with how to manage Antiochus's dark secret, for example, he slides into a melancholy that he takes with him when he leaves his country and subjects; and he continues to suffer from this condition when he washes up alone on the shores of Pentapolis, where King Simonides twice names Pericles's "melancholy" (7.52, 87).

Whatever joy he experiences when he weds Simonides's daughter, Thaisa, is soon cut short when his past catches up with him: Helicanus sends letters to Penatapolis's court telling Pericles that Antiochus and his daughter are dead and that Tyre's subjects (agitated by Pericles's

mysterious departure) threaten mutiny if Helicanus does not accept the crown. Evidently, Pericles has not been keeping track of Antiochus, nor of his own kingdom. Here, his impulse to forget appears to have triggered a national eruption. He and his now pregnant wife set sail for Tyre, but she will die during her shipboard delivery of their daughter, Marina, during a storm. Like his hasty departure from Tyre, this is another traumatic event that Pericles manages by abruptly distancing himself from his dependents, here his wife and daughter. He submits to the sailors’ “superstition” that a dead body on board prolongs a storm, and throws Thaisa “scarcely coffined, in the ooze” (11.50, 59). And then he alters the ship’s course from Tyre to Tarsus, where he leaves his infant daughter with Cleon and his wife, Dionyza. This is not an entirely thoughtless decision, for he fears the babe “[c]annot hold out to Tyrus” (11.76). Still, he charges them with raising her, and not just nursing her through her vulnerable infancy. He will have nothing to remember about his daughter’s childhood, although he pledges to keep his hair uncut “[t]ill she be married,” a peculiarly lifeless part of himself by which to measure the growth of his living daughter (13.27).

Critics generally consider this decision to leave Marina in Tarsus a necessary one for Pericles as he seeks to escape repeating the troubled family history from which he has been running since the play’s start. By removing himself from his daughter, they argue, he is able to save Marina and himself from becoming the incestuous father-daughter dyad that rots the kingdom of Antioch.¹⁵ Such Pericles-centric analyses, however, turn a deaf ear to the girls whose stories must be left behind in the service of patriarchal narratives that hinge on forgetting or rewriting the past. Indeed, there are many echoes of the play’s original incestuous pair within the various father-daughter relationships that repeatedly appear as the plot proceeds. Rather than read these recurring references as cautionary reminders for its male protagonist, I propose that we listen to them for the echoes of Antiochus’s daughter’s violation. All of the adolescent girls that surface in the play – Thaisa, Cleon’s daughter Philoten, and Marina – recover something of this story, however muffled and disjointed it may emerge.¹⁶

“With my tongue now I openly confirm”

By virtue of her position as Pericles’s love object, Thaisa is the first girl to evoke resonances of Antiochus’s daughter. Like her, the young Thaisa is a great beauty, admired by her kingly father as a creature whom “nature gat / For men

to see and, seeing, wonder at” (6.6–7). Simonides’s words echo Antiochus’s description of his daughter whose “heav’n-like face enticeth thee to view / Her countless glory, which desert must gain” (1.73–74). Their fair faces on display before would-be husbands, both daughters are keyed to the change of fourteen years. Although Thaisa’s age is not given, her birthday marks the occasion for the competition that has attracted men from around the globe to “tourney for her love,” details that suggest she has crossed the pubertal threshold and is newly ripe for marriage (5.147).¹⁷ Antiochus’s daughter is allowed just two lines in the play, both directed to Pericles before he attempts to solve her father’s riddle and gain her hand: “Of all ’sayed yet, mayst thou prove prosperous; / Of all ’sayed yet, I wish thee happiness” (1.102–3). *PA* gives more space for the articulation of her body-mind’s experience: “Desire flew in a robe of glowing blushes into her cheekes, and love inforced her to deliver thus much from hir owne tongue, that he was sole soveraigne of all her wishes, and he the gentleman (of all her eies had ever yet behelde) to whome shee wished a thriving happinesse.” Antiochus’s daughter blushes, beholds, and expresses herself. At the same time, Wilkins emphasizes the obscured origins of this repeatedly violated daughter’s desire for Pericles: “whether it were, that shee now lothed that unnecessary custome in which shee had so long continued, or that her owne affection taught her to be in love with his perfections, our storie leaves unmentioned” (17). The girl can express herself, but only to a point. Her jumbled cogitations, shamed silence, and the “custome” into which her father’s repeated violations have morphed all hinder the articulation and transmission of her full story; hence it is, perhaps, that Wilkins’s tale (and his and Shakespeare’s co-authored version) leaves the root cause of her love for Pericles “unmentioned.”

Pericles’s Thaisa, however, is readily able to express her desire for Pericles. She declares to herself that the viands at the feast are all unsavory in his presence, “wishing him my meat” (7.30). Her appetite connects her to the incestuous daughter of Antiochus (as she appears in the play), riddled to be “an eater of her mother’s flesh” (1.173). But it also moves Thaisa forward in a way that carries out and partially recuperates the original scene of paternal misbehavior that left the tale’s first adolescent girl incapable of telling her story. When Thaisa writes to her father that she will marry Pericles or die, Simonides pretends to be furious with both of them, despite admitting privately that he approves of the match and ultimately giving the pair his blessing. His feigned rage seems random and abrupt, but it serves to recollect the tale’s original scene of trauma as Wilkins described it.¹⁸ Thaisa has a scant three lines in this scene, and does not confront her father’s anger. Jackson and Taylor expand on this

episode, however, incorporating parts of Wilkins's account in which Simonides and Thaisa engage in an extended and ominous battle of the wills that looks like it very well might end in bloodshed and banishment. In their reconstructed *Pericles*, Thaisa follows up the letter she has sent to her father by openly speaking of her love and not allowing it to remain a written secret:

. . . I entreat you
 To remember that I am in love,
 The power of which love cannot be confined
 By th' power of your will. Most royal father,
 What with my pen I have in secret written
 With my tongue now I openly confirm
 Which is I have no life but in his love,
 Nor any being but in joying of his worth. (9.80–87)

Her words echo Antiochus's argument to his daughter at the start of *PA*: "[H]e was in love, and his love was resistlesse, and if resistlesse, therefore pittlesse, either to youth, blood, or beauty: In briefe, he was a tyrant and would execute his will." Antiochus uttered these "immodest sillables" with such sinful, vehement passion, Wilkins writes, that "my penne grubbes to recite them" (10–11). *Grubbes* suggests the act of digging something up; and, in this case, the author seems to regret that his pen cannot leave the King's speech buried. In the Oxford edition those immodest syllables are unearthed in Thaisa's confrontation of Simonides, but they are crucially repurposed to serve the girl as she resists the "power of his will" and asserts that he must *remember* that she is in love – and with a man who is not her father. Her words grub up the story of Antiochus's daughter, a girl who also would have a king remember her feelings and his obligations as her father, and not push his will upon her. In this way, Thaisa's tongue openly confirms what had been secret. *PA* explicitly connects Simonides's feigned paternal rage to his daughter's fiery brainwork, and the Oxford editors bring this explosive dynamic forward by incorporating it into the expanded scene. He warns her that "the bavin [firewood] of your mind / In rashness kindled must again be quenched, / Or purchase our displeasure." When she refuses to back down, he threatens her further: "I'll tame you, yea, I'll bring you in subjection" (9.89–91, 97). Even when he joins Thaisa and Pericles together, and claims that he has been joking with them all along, his language still bears the traces of an unkingly father's destructive will. In this, Q1 and the Oxford edition are in agreement: "your hands and lips must seal it too, / And being joined, I'll thus your hopes destroy, / And for your further grief, God give you joy" (9.106–8).

“Must I straight fly and burn myself?”

Marina is the offspring of this inauspiciously inaugurated and tragically brief union – a girl whose birth is marked by her mother’s apparent death during her tempest-tossed, shipboard labor. Hence, she enters the world bearing a set of traumatic stories. Unlike Antiochus’s daughter, however, she is well equipped to remember and recite them, and to have them heard. When Gower introduces the now-fourteen-year-old Marina to the audience, he invites them to turn their collective cognitive energies toward her: “Now to Marina bend your mind” (15.5).¹⁹ Importantly, the first thing they will witness is her memory-work, as the adolescent Marina enters the play mourning her nurse, Lychorida, who has just died. The girl’s opening words – “No, I will rob Tellus of her weed / To strew thy grave with flow’rs” – suggest that she will flout any rules in order to remember her nurse, the woman who has been with her since she was born (15.65–66). There is nothing modest about Marina’s commitment to robbing the earth to honor her nurse’s memory, an act she seems ready to perpetuate for months and that stirs her to remember the tragic moment of her birth:

The purple violets and marigolds
Shall as a carpet hang upon thy tomb
While summer days doth last. Ay me, poor maid,
Born in a tempest when my mother died,
This world to me is but a ceaseless storm
Whirring me from my friends. (15.67–72)

All of the sources for *PA* and *Pericles* mark Marina as being fourteen when her nurse dies, and almost all of them note that Lychorida has been the one to pass the story of the girl’s birth on to her. The specificity of this timing endows her newly dynamic brain with the crucial task of preserving the traumatic past she shares with her parents and that her nurse shares with her. The play’s emphasis on how the nurse *frequently* told Marina her origin story, however, is unique: she “oft recounted” it to her charge, a detail that does not appear in any other version of the tale (21.147).²⁰ This novel focus on the nurse’s repeated efforts to ensure that Marina remember this story is important to our exploration here of adolescent memory and testimony, and of the play’s participation in the changing cognitive ecologies of early modern England.

Unlike her father, Marina does not sink into melancholic paralysis when she remembers her difficult history in this scene. (Later in the play, Helicanus will point to the incapacitated, unshorn Pericles and lament

how his prince has been overwhelmed by his memory of those same events: "This was a goodly person / Till the disaster of one mortal night / Drove him to this" [21.28–30].) Although Marina is not remembering these details based on her conscious experience of them, they move through her fourteen-year-old brain here in ways that feature her capacity to carefully digest, store, and express them. She even appears to have been unaffected by the tumultuous environment into which she was born, natal influences that early moderns would have considered formational to the body-mind's development. When Pericles first holds his newborn daughter, he tells her, "[t]hou hast as chiding a nativity / As fire, air, water, earth, and heav'n can make / To herald thee from th'womb" (11.32–34). At fourteen, Marina describes the world as a "ceaseless storm . . . whirring" her from her friends, but she does not appear to be experiencing any overwhelming imbalance of the humors or affections as she remembers the story of her stormy birth.

When the adolescent Marina enters the play, Gower describes her as a model of cognitive discipline. She has been "[a]t Tarsus, and by Cleon trained / In music, letters; who hath gained / Of education all the grace, / Which makes her both the heart and place / of gen'ral wonder" (15.7–11). Her foster mother, Dionyza, envious of how Marina's gifts have overshadowed her daughter Philoten's, is determined to kill her. She hires Leonine to do the deed. Before he reveals his intentions to Marina, however, she returns once again to her origin story, adding details that cast her father as active and courageous:

My father, as nurse says, did never fear,
But cried 'Good seamen' to the mariners,
Galling his kingly hands with haling ropes,
And, clasping to the mast, endured a sea
That almost burst the deck. (15.103–7)

The play again departs from its sources by including this scene in which Marina tells her origin story to the murderer, and by having her produce a version that recalls a heroic Pericles that does not match the helpless man whom the audience already has witnessed in the real-time staging of her birth.²¹ In reproducing what the nurse has passed on to her, her memory brings forward a fearless father, a man who pulled ropes with his "kingly hands" to help save his family. At this point, then, her memory serves as a storehouse for a specifically benevolent story of paternal and kingly strength, one that counters the story of Antiochus. Through Marina's recollection of Lychorida's version of events, the daughter gains a protective father *and* a nurse who is able to transmit her charge's story.

A few moments later, however, Marina is threatened with a new series of traumatic events that she will be left all on her own to face and remember. Leonine attempts to kill her, a surprise that is interrupted by a band of pirates who seize Marina and who eventually will sell her to a brothel in Mytilene. Before it is clear to Leonine what the pirates intend to do with her, he assesses his options: “I’ll swear she’s dead / And thrown into the sea; but I’ll see further. / Perhaps they will but please themselves upon her, / Not carry her aboard. If she remain / Whom they have ravished must by me be slain” (15.147–51). Both scenarios that Leonine imagines here recall the traumatic fates of the play’s other daughters: if they take Marina, then he will lie and say that her dead body (like her mother’s before her) was cast into the sea; if she is to be raped (like Antiochus’s daughter), then he’ll just wait until they’re done with her and then finish her off. In either case, she will be remembered for dead.

The fact that Marina has just been recalling a history of her father that envisioned him as brave and protective is deeply ironic, of course, for Pericles is partially responsible for her exposure to these violent events. In *PA*, Dionyza justifies her plot to murder Marina by casting Pericles as a father who has forgotten his daughter anyway: “It is now quoth she, fourteene years since *Pericles* this out-shining gerles father departed this our City, in all which time we have not received so much as a Letter, to signifie that he remembers her, or any other token. . . . [H]e is either surely dead, or not regards her” (74). Although no character in the play goes so far as to level this claim against Pericles, the fact remains that he has left Marina for fourteen years in the hands of a ruler who is too weak to control or expose his cruel partner’s actions. Dionyza pressures Cleon to collude with her in telling Pericles that his daughter died in her sleep, and he goes along with it despite his moral reservations. Cleon did not initiate these deeds, but he recognizes that his passive misgovernment of home and city disqualifies him from claiming membership in any “noble strain.” A ruler on whose watch such evil acts have occurred, Cleon claims, “did not flow / From honourable sources” (17.23, 27–28). When he had first accepted the infant, Cleon told Pericles that the grateful subjects of Tarsus would protect Marina should he himself fail in his duties: “If neglection / Should therein make me vile, the common body / By you relieved would force me to my duty” (13.20–22). As recent events have made clear, however, a ruler should not abdicate responsibility for his actions by relying on his subjects. In the dark as to Cleon’s ignoble behavior, the citizens of Tarsus cannot amend his unkingly neglect and force him to his duties. Nor is it their job to do so.

This is a hard truth that the play consistently brings forward. Although he has not consented to his daughter's misfortunes, Pericles is ultimately responsible for her and for the citizens of Tyre, but he becomes an increasingly impotent paternal and governing figure from this point forward in the play. When he returns to Tarsus to retrieve Marina, only to learn of her alleged death, he abandons his subjects once again: "in sorrow all devoured," he sets out to sea and descends into self-imposed silence, refusing to wash his face, cut his hair, or wear anything but sack-cloth (18.25, 28–29). Here as elsewhere, Pericles's memory either fails or incapacitates him. While he willfully retreats from the world to lose himself in his family's tragic history, the play cannot choose but attend to and remember Marina's present plight. As Gower tells the audience: Pericles "bear[s] his courses to be orderèd / By Lady Fortune, while our scene must play / His daughter's woe and heavy well-a-day / In her unholy service" (18.41–44).

The vacuum Pericles leaves behind when he withdraws from his obligations will be filled by multiple scenes of attempted rape that collect around his increasingly endangered fourteen-year-old daughter. The most extended of these scenes is Marina's encounter with the governor of Mytilene, Lysimachus, who comes to pay full price for what has been marketed to him as a virgin prostitute. In their reconstructed *Pericles*, Jackson and Taylor incorporate significant material from *PA* into Marina's exchange with him in the brothel, including Lysimachus's threatening advances:

Pretty one, my authority can wink
 At blemishes, or can on faults look friendly;
 Or my displeasure punish at my pleasure,
 From which displeasure, not thy beauty shall
 Privilege thee, nor my affection, which
 Hath drawn me here, abate with further ling'ring.
 Come bring me to some private place. Come, come. (19.84–90)

As Jackson and Taylor note, their decision to bring Lysimachus's words from *PA* into this scene makes him appear much worse than he does in *Q1*. In doing so, they suggest that they may be returning the script to its originally intended form: "Here and in subsequent passages in this scene, *PA* may preserve Shakespeare's original words, while *Q1* records the politically censored version that was actually performed" (2763n1). If true, then state-sponsored censorship becomes yet one more mechanism working to bury tyrannical behavior and the stories of its victims by keeping them unstaged and unheard. A return to *PA*'s opening scene is instructive

here. Lysimachus’s assertion that he has power to wink at faults and punish at his pleasure, and his push to get Marina alone in “some private place” recall Antiochus’s dismissal of his daughter’s attendants: he “desired some private conference with her,” he demands, and then (after clearing the room) tells her, “shee was bound to obey, [and] he was a King that had power to commaund” (10).

In Q1, Marina responds to Lysimachus’s aggression with a mild rebuke: “If you were born to honour, show it now” (19.94). Jackson and Taylor bring a more worldly perspective to her criticism by incorporating Wilkins’s account, in which she sharply warns Lysimachus of the disorderly, unethical consequences he faces should he apply his political power to his personal behavior: “Let not authority, which teaches you / To govern others, be the means to make you / Misgovern much yourself” (19.91–93). She continues on in the reconstructed version:

What reason’s in
Your justice, who hath power over all,
To undo any? If you take from me
Mine honour, you’re like him that makes a gap
Into forbidden ground, whom after
Too many enter, and of all their evils
Yourself are guilty.
...
Then if your violence deface this building,
The workmanship of heav’n, you do kill your honour,
Abuse your justice, and impoverish me.
My yet good lord, if there be fire before me,
Must I straight fly and burn myself? (96–108, *passim*)

Marina’s imagery here reverberates with Antiochus’s sinful, forbidden intrusions into his daughter’s body. In *PA*, the raped daughter indeed becomes a defaced building, a “ransackt cittie.” If, as Jackson and Taylor suggest, this speech was in the play as it was first intended to be presented, then its authors were scripting a powerful act of reparation. Marina merges with the play’s first violated daughter here and recollects that initial scene from Wilkins; only now, she can rebuke her rapist while bearing witness to what no one else in Antiochus’s daughter’s world could or would. Marina unearths the immodest syllables Wilkins’s pen was loath to grub up as she warns Lysimachus not to dig into her “forbidden ground.” Her speech also recalls and resists the death by lightning bolt that finally takes down Antiochus’s daughter along with her father. Helicanus describes how “[a] fire from heaven came and shrivelled up / Their bodies e’en to

loathing" (8.10–11), but Marina's words question the inevitability of such a punitive fate: "if there be fire before me, / Must I straight fly and burn myself?"

Marina's protests redeem Lysimachus, who eventually recognizes her virtue and claims that "[t]hough I brought hither a corrupted mind, / Thy speech hath altered it," but they also work to redeem Antiochus's daughter and her tainted reputation (19.121–22). "How long have you been / Of this profession?" asks Lysimachus. Marina's cryptic reply – "E'er since I can remember" – connects her, through her memory-work, to a long line of destroyed girls, ruined cogitations, and marred histories (19.68–69). At the same time, this fourteen-year-old is uniquely enabled to recuperate them here through her outspoken "profession" and righteous judgment of unkingly behaviour. Her persuasive rhetoric (also evident in Q1, although expressed in an apolitical way) successfully wards off Lysimachus and her future customers' advances. And this skill becomes her ticket out of the brothel: moving forward, she will earn her keep by teaching not only sewing, weaving, dancing, and singing, but also (it is implied) rhetoric: "Deep clerks she dumbs," Gower tells us (20.5).

The daughter of Antiochus was not able to report her violation, have it understood, and have it stopped. And so, in whatever different ways she enters the tale's many versions (including *PA*), she leaves them all as a girl who shares her father's guilt and must suffer alongside him in death. But when Marina finally stands before *her* father in the play's recognition scene, she gives voice and dimension to girls like Antiochus's daughter, who have suffered a persistent, insidious truth about memory, trauma, and female testimony. Sent to heal her disabled father, she initially holds her full story back from him: "If I should tell / My history, it would seem like lies / Disdained in the reporting" (21.105–7). From where would Marina get the idea that her history would not be believed if she told it?²²

Critics tend to read Marina and Pericles's exchange in this climactic scene as one that mutually reinforces and unites their stories, but Marina's reluctance to tell her history contributes to the staging of their profoundly different relationships to memory and the past.²³ The play-text adds a character to this scene who materializes the play's many doublings of its adolescent girls with the plight of Antiochus's daughter: "Sir, I will use / My utmost skill in his recure," Marina tells Lysimachus, "provided / That none but I and my companion maid / Be suffered to come near him" (21.64–67). The maid appears in none of the other versions of the tale (including *PA*) and is unnecessary to the plot, and yet Marina insists that she go with her to attend on Pericles.²⁴ She may be singing or playing an

instrument with Marina, for Lysimachus asks her: “Marked he your music?” Jackson and Taylor give this maid the one-line reply: “No, nor looked on us” (2I.68–69). Q1 attributes the line to Marina. On one level, it is irrelevant which girl speaks here, as the line clearly marks the other’s companionate presence. But, on another level, the Oxford editors’ decision to replace Marina with the maid in this brief exchange is an act of poetic justice, for it allows the shadowy girl to speak, if only for a moment, and to testify to the fact that she has not been heard or acknowledged.

The maid is not mentioned again, but she remains on stage as a witness to Pericles’s violence against Marina. This act is unspecified in the play, but named by Wilkins, Twine, and Gower as a blow to her face. (Twine gives the most graphic of these accounts, describing how her father struck her with his foot, “so that shee fell to the ground, and the bloud gushed plentifully out of her cheekes.”)²⁵ In the play, Marina registers his aggressive act by declaring that “if you did know my parentage, / My lord, you would not do me violence” (2I.87–88). She assumes that her familial history would have deterred Pericles from whatever violence he clearly has done to her. This is a plea that falls on deaf ears when Antiochus’s daughter makes “demaund of her unkingly father, what hee meant by this” while he, “forgetting the feare of heaven, love to his childe, or reputation amongst men,” prepares to rape her (11). In Pericles’s many pushes to forget – his escape from Antioch’s inconvenient truth, his hasty flight from his subjects, his fourteen-year absence from Marina, and finally his retreat from all fellowship – he, too, proves himself unkingly toward his subjects and his daughter. In *PA*, he strikes her because she has chastised him (much as she did Lysimachus) for not living up to these duties: “she beganne with morall precepts to reprove him, and tolde him, that hee was borne a Prince, whose dignity being to governe others, it was most foule in him to misgoverne himselfe” (104).²⁶

By the time Pericles realizes who Marina may be, and entreats her to “[r]eport thy parentage” and “[t]ell thy story,” her memory has shifted to accommodate another version of it, one that no longer features the brave, protective father she had invoked in Tarsus (2I.117, 122). Now he emerges in her origin story solely as the man who named her, and she describes his potency in decidedly moderate terms: “The name / Was given me by one that had some power: / My father, and a king” (2I.135–37). Marina focuses more on Thaisa’s place in her history than on Pericles’s: “My mother was the daughter of a king, / Who died when I was born, as my good nurse / Lychorida hath oft recounted weeping” (2I.145–47). It is instructive here to recall the distributive memory networks that Tribble,

Keene, and Sutton outline, for in telling this version of her origin story, Marina connects herself, via the descriptive phrase "the daughter of a king," both to her mother and the violated, silenced daughter of King Antiochus whose history and body are buried in the play's past. She also digs up a flawed version of her father as she recounts to Pericles the traumatic events that her fourteen-year-old self has had to endure and remember all on her own:

The King my father did in Tarsus leave me,
 Till cruel Cleon, with his wicked wife,
 Did seek to murder me, and wooed a villain
 To attempt the deed; who having drawn to do't,
 A crew of pirates came and rescued me.
 To Mytilene they brought me. (21.157–62)

In this account, "the King my father" becomes the man who left her in Tarsus, an act that she connects to her attempted murder. Thus her memory-work clarifies a theme that the play as a whole is intent on bringing forward: men's unkingly abuses and the ethical hazards of forgetting their victims. In telling her own painful story, she excavates the tale's original violation and seems to measure her father against it. Marina recalibrates Pericles's place in her history, making it conditional on his distance from unkingly acts: "I am the daughter to King Pericles, / If good King Pericles be," she declares (21.165–66). There is no guarantee that the two identifiers *good* and *King* will merge, and the double meaning in her phrasing suggests that Marina will not own him as her father if they don't: *If* King Pericles be good, *then* I am his daughter.

In response to Pericles's final demand for evidence – that she "prove but true" by telling him his "drowned queen's name" – Marina replies with one last iteration of her origin story (21.193, 191). In it, she again displaces her father in favour of her mother and defines her relationship to him in conditional terms: "Is it no more / To be your daughter than to say my mother's name? / Thaisa was my mother, who did end / The minute I began" (21.195–98). These are Marina's final lines in the play. While they give her father the evidence he seeks, they also emend his description of his wife's demise. Thaisa was not a "drowned queen" (although Pericles did consent to her hasty, uncoffined descent into the ooze); she died giving life to her daughter. Although Thaisa later will be revived, what matters is that Marina tethers her own genesis to this more truthful remembrance of her mother's history.

In the play's final miraculous scene of familial reunion at Ephesus, Pericles appears to acknowledge his daughter's corrective memory-work. Standing at the altar to Diana, he faithfully echoes Marina's version of his

wife’s shipboard trauma: “At sea in childbed died she, but brought forth / A maid child called Marina” (22.25–26). He also owns his role in the unceremonious treatment of her body: “I threw her overboard with these same arms” (22.39). At the same time, however, Pericles tells a slightly different version of the father-daughter relationship than the one Marina finally delivered to him in Mytilene – one that puts her memory in the service of his paternal rights: “by her own most clear remembrance, she / Made known herself my daughter” (22.32–33). There are limits, it would seem, to how far a father can bend his mind to accommodate his daughter’s conditional, potentially critical recollections of him and his place in her history.

“Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?”

If editorial and scholarly traditions have suppressed the broken body-mind of Antiochus’s daughter, they have relentlessly showcased Ophelia’s. *Hamlet’s* adolescent girl is best known for her madness and consequent destruction by drowning. As girlhood scholar Catherine Driscoll points out, Ophelia is widely read as an image, first controlled by Polonius and later monumentalized as a drowned corpse. Visuals of her dead body, she argues, frequently appear in films and paintings as “part of a twentieth-century iconography of girls drowning in sex, love, and femininity.”²⁷ In other words, we see Ophelia as a hapless victim because that is what we need to see in order to support our modern-day notions of female adolescence. And when we listen to her, we hear only fragments of her cogitations. Critics generally focus on Ophelia’s “mad” scenes, approaching them with an understanding of girlhood that connects females to their fathers, brothers, and would-be husbands: she has lost her mind because of her pain over either her father’s death or her erstwhile lover’s abusive treatment. These readings are in part informed by a long scholarly tradition that presumes all early modern female body-minds were considered naturally disabled.²⁸ While some of these studies do important feminist work by calling attention to the gendered structures that oppress and silence females, the distinction they tend to make between Ophelia’s somatized madness and Hamlet’s politically minded melancholy does not do justice to this particular girl, or to early modern girlhood and cognition more broadly.

What gets lost in these interpretations is Ophelia the performer of history, a girl who comes on stage in act 4 to captivate the members of the Danish court with her insightful speeches and songs about the lost

majesty of Denmark – the increasingly ignored past that rots the nation. Surely Shakespeare would not have put her scenes in the midst of the Players' performances and Hamlet's escalating commitment to "put an antic disposition on" without wanting his audiences to consider Ophelia herself as a kind of player, and not simply one who is played upon (1.5.173).²⁹ By not listening more attentively to what she says (not only in her "mad" scenes, but elsewhere), readers, viewers, theater practitioners, and critics generally miss (or suppress) her role as one of the play's most persistent chroniclers. In what follows, I take her out of the muddy brook and bring her back on stage to take a closer look at what Shakespeare was doing when he imagined Ophelia as an adolescent girl capable of a particular kind of memory-work and testimony.

From the first moment Ophelia is on stage, her brother and father seek to control not only her behavior with Hamlet, but also her memory. Laertes warns her not to trust Hamlet's vows of love to her. He directs his sister to "remember well / What I have said to you," and Ophelia claims that she will keep her brother's words "in my memory locked, / And you yourself shall keep the key of it" (1.3.84–86).³⁰ Polonius echoes her brother's concerns, but also downgrades her cognitive abilities, instructing her to listen to her father and "think yourself a baby": "You do not understand yourself so clearly / As it behoves my daughter and your honour" (1.3.105, 96–97). In her first on-stage encounter with Hamlet, however, it is clear that Ophelia's adolescent brain understands and stores up much more than her father's and brother's precepts. This exchange begins after Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" speech. Ophelia has been on stage the whole time, and either Hamlet has not seen her, or he has pretended not to. In any case, he acknowledges her presence by turning to her at the end of his speech and commanding her to pray: "Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered" (3.1.91–92). Like the other men in her life, Hamlet wants her to remember him, and in this case his wrongdoings. Although it is difficult to determine how much of Hamlet's spoken wish here is a performance put on for the spying Polonius and Claudius and how much he may genuinely be desiring it, his words acknowledge the capacity of girls' memories to store up men's deeds.

According to Ophelia's own words in this scene, however, her memory can do more than simply register and recall the sins Hamlet may have in mind. She tells him, "I have remembrances of yours / That I have longed long to redeliver" (3.1.95–96). She describes his letters to her as being with "words of so sweet breath composed / As made the things more rich." But, over time, as he has changed, so have his remembrances: "Their perfume

lost, / Take these again; for to the noble mind / Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind,” she tells him (3.1.101–4). Her memory is not just a storehouse for his remembrances; her “noble mind” brings them out, re-evaluates them, and notes how they have changed in light of his unkindness. The brainwork in which she engages here puts her mind on a par with Prince Hamlet’s – or, at least, her memory of it.

Ophelia spends the remainder of the scene mourning Hamlet’s cognitive decline: “O what a noble mind is here o’erthrown!” she laments once he has left the stage having spewed all manner of offensive comments at her (3.1.149). Modern critics typically interpret her ensuing speech as an expression of her heartbreak over Hamlet’s treatment of her, a reading whose only evidence rests in her one reference to their romantic past: she “sucked the honey of his music vows” (3.1.155). In fact, the entire speech is usually cut from film versions, a trend that speaks to how Ophelia’s character has been passed down over the centuries.³¹ The production history that silences her voice at this moment suppresses a vital motif, for Ophelia’s speech is central to establishing her as a witness to the past and present state of Denmark:

The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s eye, tongue, sword,
Th’expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th’observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh;
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O woe is me,
T’have seen what I have seen, see what I see! (3.1.150–60)

A consideration of the full speech makes it clear that Ophelia is not primarily lamenting the loss of her lover, but rather the loss of Denmark’s Prince and its future. The lady who sucked the honey of his music vows (past tense), “*Now see[s]* that noble and most sovereign reason / Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh” (emphasis mine). Her use of synesthesia and deixis highlights the urgent, dynamic interplay of all her senses, as taste and hearing turn to insight. Ophelia sees harsh jangling in Hamlet’s mind, and knows what future ills it bodes: “Th’expectancy and rose of the fair state” is “blasted with ecstasy,” she laments. She sees backward and forward into the state of Denmark by assessing its Prince’s current condition. Hamlet’s overthrown mind marks his present decline

and dashes the expectations of a nation. Her concluding lament – "O woe is me, / T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see!" – situates her squarely in the role of privileged, though pained, observer. Polonius and Claudius witness the same scene Ophelia does, yet they form separate and more limited interpretations of its meaning. Claudius presumes that it stems from a brooding "melancholy," and Polonius reads Hamlet's erratic, aggressive behavior toward his daughter as springing from "neglected love" (3.1.164, 177). Both men dismiss Ophelia's nationally minded insights – what she sees and what she has seen. As her father tells her: "You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said; / We heard it all" (3.1.178–79). But the play consistently highlights Ophelia's gifts of observation, and those around her would do well to listen to her testimony. For example, she (and not Horatio) is the first one to register Claudius's guilty response to the *Mousetrap*, a play that recounts versions of recent Danish history: "The King rises," she notes (3.2.243).³²

In her role as witness to Denmark's political and national rot, Ophelia recalls two well-known figures from the classical past: Dido and Aeneas, the audience and narrator respectively of Troy's destruction in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*. In *Titus Andronicus*, Dido is explicitly described as the "sad-attending" woman who entertains Aeneas to "tell the tale twice o'er" (3.2.27). Ophelia is like Dido in that she is expected to listen to men's stories and store them up for safe keeping. But in some cases, she also hears a larger story that others do not – like when she (unlike her father or King Claudius) understands the national consequences of the sweet bells jangling out of tune in Hamlet's noble mind. When she focuses on her powers of sight and testimony, she also resembles Aeneas, the Trojan prince who witnesses, remembers, and then tells his tale to Dido of King Priam's death and Troy's fall. This connection is important, because Shakespeare puts this specific act of remembrance in the mouth of the Player in act 2. Actors, "the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time," represent the most enduring historians in the play, and Ophelia, in so many ways, evokes that same Player whom Hamlet envies and admires for his ability to tell the story of Priam's slaughter and Hecuba's grief with such passion (2.2.504). There are many resemblances between Ophelia, when she is described as being mad in act 4, and the Player who recreates Troy's fall: her "unshapèd" speech, "her winks and nods and gestures" mirror the Player's "distraction in 's aspect" and "broken voice" (4.5.8, 11; 2.2.532–33).

Shakespeare was playing with the idea of the Globe as a space in which history could be acted out and remembered by having Hamlet state that

“memory holds a seat / In this distracted globe” (1.5.96–97). In writing Ophelia as a girl who remembers and testifies to men’s words and deeds, might he have been imagining her as a kind of actor/chronicler? If Hamlet and the Player can put on a distracted aspect, why can’t she? One might answer that Hamlet has learned how to put on moods from his all-male grammar school and university education in classical rhetoric, while Ophelia has had no such training. As Carol Rutter explains in her work on Renaissance pedagogy, schoolboys were taught to cross-dress rhetorically through *ethopoeia*, or impersonation, performing and emoting the distracted and impassioned words of Dido, Medea, Ariadne, and other suffering women of classical texts. Students were encouraged to use *ethopoeia* to make their speeches memorable and moving. Citing early modern educational treatises, Rutter argues that role-playing functioned as a kind of early modern version of method acting and that, by ventriloquizing the passions of these women, “Shakespeare’s grown men re-cite the playwright’s grammar school childhood.”³³ As a girl, Ophelia would not have had this formal rhetorical education. But this does not mean that she cannot learn how to put on madness or emotion in the way a young man was taught to do. Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” speech is a declamation that exemplifies *controversia*, an exercise in oratory and memory that was part of every grammar school curriculum in Elizabethan England. His lengthy speech temporarily transports the play’s audience to an alternative space – that of the classroom, with Ophelia standing at its margins (holding a book no less). Has she learned something from which most early modern girls would have been barred by listening in on his rhetorical exercise? We know that Shakespeare and Wilkins were capable of imagining such a learned girl with Marina, who was trained in music *and* letters, and is openly praised for her rhetorical skill (15.7–8). When Ophelia mourns for “That unmatched form and feature of blown youth / Blasted with ecstasy,” and laments “O woe is me, / T’have seen what I have seen, see what I see!” she may be putting on some of the sadly attending Dido, a character who is instrumental in getting the history of Troy to be told and retold (3.1.158–60).

The first words Ophelia speaks when she comes on stage allegedly insane evoke and invite a similar kind of historical tale-telling: “Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?” (4.5.21).³⁴ The line clearly recalls her earlier speech, pre-“madness,” in which she lamented the sweet bells that jangle out of tune in Hamlet’s formerly noble mind and the loss of Denmark’s “rose of the fair state” that they heralded. Gertrude and Horatio are the only ones on stage, but it is the Queen who asks her for

clarification: "How now, Ophelia?" The girl responds by singing, "How should I your true love know / From another one?" Again, Gertrude is the one to ask Ophelia to explain the meaning in her words: "Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?" She replies that the Queen should "mark" her as she continues: "He is dead and gone, lady, / He is dead and gone. / At his head a grass-green turf, / At his heels a stone." When Gertrude interjects – "Nay, but Ophelia" – the girl stops her with words that grub up the earth and confront her audience with the body beneath it: "Pray you, mark. / White his shroud as the mountain snow –," she begins, before Claudius enters and interrupts her (4.5.22–35, *passim*).

By initially focusing on the widowed Queen, Ophelia's performance simultaneously recalls Gertrude's personal loss and all of her listeners' shared national history, the death of the King – an event that is rotting their fair state. Where, indeed, *is* the beauteous majesty of Denmark? In Q1, Ofelia (as she is named) is directed to come on stage as follows: *Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her hair down, singing*. As Deanne Williams argues, the instrument "transforms our understanding of this character beyond the familiar paradigms of hysteria and passivity, and allows us to associate her instead with the mastery of musical technique and the *sangfroid* of performance." Her reading is critical for highlighting Ophelia's status as a focused and accomplished performing girl in this scene, and in Q1 especially, where she is called "young" and "poor maid."³⁵ Although Williams interprets Ofelia/Ophelia's song as an expression of her romantic grief, her identification of Ophelia's controlled musical performance complements my reading here of the girl's memory-work. Before she enters, Horatio describes how Ophelia's words "carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing, / Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move / The hearers to collection" (4.5.7–9).³⁶ *Collection* could denote an abstract, or summing up. Like the Players, the "abstracts and brief chronicles of the time," Ophelia may be inspiring her hearers to see and hear the history in her performance. The term also suggests that her utterances are moving her hearers to *recollect* – a mental dynamic that signals the work of distributive cognition. Ophelia's words are initially unshaped, but they trigger those who listen to "botch [patch] the words up fit to their own thoughts" (4.5.10). This shared cognitive work is not seamless by any means – but neither is the embodied, collective work of remembering painful histories. Despite Horatio's initial evaluation of Ophelia's senseless, solitary speech, he finally grants that her words gain substance and thought when processed by an audience: "her winks and

nods and gestures yield them, / Indeed would make one think there might be thought, / Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily” (4.5.11–13).

And yet, like readers, viewers, and scholars of the play to this day, everyone hears what he or she wants to when Ophelia comes on stage in her “mad” state. The second time she does so, she comes to hand out flowers and herbs. Claudius interprets her gloomy act as springing “[a]ll from her father’s death,” as does Laertes (4.5.73, 158–62); and many a modern critic, focusing mostly on the St. Valentine’s Day ballad that she sings earlier in the scene, considers her distracted state the result of her romantic and/or allegedly sexual betrayal by Hamlet.³⁷ Despite the fact that she hands out rosemary “for remembrance” and pansies “for thoughts” to her audience, Laertes reads his sister as a “document in madness” – a line that famously has helped lay the groundwork for her reception as a cognitively damaged girl by future audiences and readers (4.5.173–75).

Although the history Ophelia relates is not properly understood by most of her on-stage listeners, she occupies an important position within the play as an agent of remembrance. Unlike the Player who performs the murder of Priam and the fall of Troy, Ophelia is tasked with performing the brief chronicle of the play-world’s actual past, which Gertrude forecasts as a prologue to the tragedy yet to come. When she hears Horatio’s description of the effects Ophelia’s winks, nods, gestures, and words have on her audiences, she responds: “To my sick soul, as sin’s true nature is, / Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss” (4.5.17–18). Like the ghost of Hamlet, Sr., Ophelia urges her viewers and listeners to remember. Only, unlike the ghost, she is not speaking to an audience of one: her insistence on memory connects her to a larger community of sufferers. Catherine Belsey notes that when Young Prince Edward speaks of Julius Caesar in *Richard III*, “the Prince is much concerned with the question of historical memory. The truth ought to survive, he believes, even if it escapes the written record.” She argues that he “talks like a schoolboy” and that he uses a series of “neat rhetorical turns.”³⁸ A. J. Piesse similarly argues that “masculine childhood” is “the site for the making of the early modern performative textual self,” and that the young boys in Shakespeare’s plays make explicit the connection between text, history, and character.³⁹ But historical memory is not the sole provenance of schoolboys and schooled men. Like the Player and the schoolboy who both recited the tale of Hecuba and moved their audiences to tears and remembrance, Ophelia operates here as an agent of national memory clothed in the guise of personal female loss.

"She chanted snatches of old tunes"

Hamlet's editors and critics commonly recognize that Ophelia's opening song in 4.5, "How should I your true love know / From another one," echoes the lines of a well-known anonymous ballad, "Walsingham."⁴⁰ The village of Walsingham was home to a famous pre-Reformation pilgrimage site in Norfolk, a shrine to the Virgin Mary, and the ballad was especially popular among sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Catholic musicians. Alison Shell argues that it "would have evoked Catholic complaint and threnody simply by being played."⁴¹ In the original ballad, a male lover stops a pilgrim to ask if he has seen his lady love, who has left him to go on a pilgrimage to Walsingham. Alison A. Chapman notes that the ballad "offers a striking image of female mobility" that would have been available to female pilgrims in the medieval past.⁴² These readings of specifically Catholic performances and religious activities are further strengthened by the possibility that the image of Ophelia playing on the lute (at least in Q1) would have recalled other young female Catholic martyrs. Linda Austern argues that some early seventeenth-century portraits of female lutenists, with their faces upturned, were "one short step removed from St. Cecilia."⁴³

Shell argues that Ophelia's Catholic-inflected songs and speech also connect her to a particular early modern English cultural memory: "The impossibility of forgetting the medieval past, and the horrors of remembering it, permeate post-Reformation English culture both inside and outside Catholic circles." It is no coincidence, she writes, that "the madness of the traumatised Ophelia embodies itself in snatches of Catholic material, evoking lost worlds of pilgrimage and purgatory." Although Shell's interpretation of Ophelia as mad speaks to a critical history that I have been pushing against here, her identification of Ophelia as a voice of communal trauma and loss is extremely valuable. Shell suggests that the oral performance of a group's history was especially applicable to Catholics in post-Reformation England for whom "things could be said or sung that could not easily be printed."⁴⁴

Ophelia is not urging her audiences to remember just the Catholicism of the medieval past, then, but also the Catholics who were still alive (if not exactly thriving under post-Reformation restrictions) in Shakespeare's England. A return to Tribble and Keene's work on distributive memory networks is instructive here. They describe recent research on "transactive memory" that opens up another way of thinking about Ophelia's memory-work. This model suggests that "memory may be distributed across smaller

groups in which remembering takes place collaboratively."⁴⁵ Considered through this lens, Ophelia's Catholic-inflected remembrances work like the snatches of Denmark's history that she also performs and that inspire her hearers to fit up their thoughts to hers.

Taken together, these ideas challenge the conventional view of Ophelia's singing as an act whose main effect is to increase "the tragic impression of her isolation in madness," or to conjoin "the love for Hamlet and her filial love."⁴⁶ Such conclusions trap Ophelia and the girls she represents in a developmental model that binds their brainwork to fathers and husbands and ignores the unique ways in which early modern adolescent girls were seen to imagine, assess, invent, and remember. Rather than focusing on Ophelia's attachment to Hamlet and her heartbroken derangement, scholars like Chapman make the case that Ophelia's Catholic references "raise resonant questions about the position of women in England's religious past." She reads Ophelia's tale of the Baker's daughter, for instance, as her longing for contact with God, something that the Protestant emphasis on God's material absence has provoked.⁴⁷ Her argument dovetails with John Sutton's discussion of how memory was increasingly tasked with constructing one's ethical subjectivity through the retention of things that were not present (like God) and through the imposition of narrative order on otherwise disordered social changes and recent histories.

These models are enormously useful for exploring why the brainwork of Catholic girls in particular is often imagined to negotiate this problematic relationship between England's past, present, and future in Shakespeare's world. The daughters of English recusant parents, especially those who were getting themselves to nunneries overseas, were uniquely positioned to remind audiences of a past that refused to disappear or accommodate itself to a new order. Like the ghost of Hamlet's father, whom Stephen Greenblatt famously reads as a Catholic remnant that insists on being remembered, these girls performed a specific kind of intervention into post-Reformation English culture.⁴⁸ In her recent work on early modern Catholic Englishwomen's writings and literary history, Jenna Lay argues that nuns and recusant women "resisted any easy demarcation between a Catholic, medieval past and a Protestant, reformed present in both their religious practice and their print and manuscript books."⁴⁹ Ophelia, too, disrupts these divisions, allowing what was being officially oppressed and silenced in Protestant England to resurface.

Ophelia also gives voice more particularly to those English Catholic girls who were trying to resist the push to become "women" in the Protestant

sense of "wife and mother" when Shakespeare was writing. Catholic daughters sent to be educated in convents overseas, or to enter them as novices, formed populations of adolescent English girls that both represented and enabled the future of their faith back home. I focus on these girls in my final chapter, but I introduce one of them now as a way to connect Ophelia (and the other girls I have considered here who attempt to resist and bear witness to unkingly acts of oppression) to this group. When Thomas Penson, a Protestant Englishman touring the low countries, visited a Carmelite convent in Antwerp, he encountered a young English novice standing at a grate. He describes the meeting in his journal: "There soon appeared (as an angel of light) a delicate, proper, young, beautiful lady, all in white garments and barefaced, whose graceful presence was delightful to behold and yet struck an awful reverence, considering she was devout and religious." In this spectacular moment, the young, beautiful Catholic girl inspires both delight and awe. But, it turns out, she can speak as well. After Penson "fed my greedy eye a short moment on this lovely creature," he tells her that his English countrymen wonder at her self-sacrifice: "For we account it no less than being buried alive to be immured within the confines of these walls."⁵⁰ At this, she replies by countering his Protestant-inflected view of what a girl wants and thinks: "[A]lthough for my part I may forsake this place when I please, being now but in the year of my noviceship, yet do assure you, Sir, I find so great satisfaction and contentment in this manner of life (being daily present with these devout women in holy exercises and prayer), that I would not change conditions with any princess or noble lady in the world."⁵¹ In Penson's account, the English girl positions herself as a potentially perpetual adolescent. She may leave the convent walls whenever she pleases, but she may choose never to leave them at all, and to find satisfaction in becoming one of the devout women married to God among whom she lives, prays, and exercises her religion. Wherever the girl's future leads, her testimony makes one thing clear: she may have been displaced, but she is not a "buried" casualty of England's shifting religious landscape.

In Ophelia's last audible moments (so we are told), she "chanted snatches of old tunes" as she floated in the water (4.7.148). The image recalls the songs of these oppressed Catholic communities – especially in its Q2 form when "tunes" become "lauds," or hymns of praise – even as the play mutes her remembrances here by keeping them off stage and filtering them through Gertrude's account of her drowning. Ophelia sings "incapable of her own distress," according to the Queen, a description that suggests the girl was not conscious of her final moments, much less in

control of her brainwork (4.7.149). But just as Person’s angel of light defied his expectations of her misery, Ophelia’s relationship to her alleged “distress” may lie only in the eye of her beholders (whomever they may be) and her secondhand chroniclers. The Antwerp novice appears to have gotten herself to a nunnery with no regrets, and perhaps – through the distributive memory networks Shakespeare’s girl invokes – Ophelia has as well. If we listen more closely to her, we may hear those same “sweet bells jangled out of tune” that first inspired her to gesture, speak, and sing the suppressed stories of Denmark’s history and England’s living Catholic subjects.

“So yeah, I cut that”

In October 2016, Michelle Hensley directed a production of *Pericles* for Ten Thousand Things theater company in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She made two key changes to Wilkins and Shakespeare’s play. She describes the first one thus:

The only [part of the play] I cut, which we all found highly offensive, was the unopposed argument that the daughter [of Antiochus] is somehow responsible for her own incest and deserves to be punished just as much as her father. Not only do I find it offensive, but there are women in our audiences who have been victims of that kind of abuse, so I will not let them for a second take any responsibility for that. So yeah, I cut that.⁵²

With a soon-to-be American president boasting about his sexual harassment of women, and with the #MeToo movement soon to become a viral phenomenon, Hensley’s concern for shamed and silenced women bears the marks of the particular cultural and political moment at which she was staging *Pericles*. It surely informed the second change Hensley made to the play – the insertion of a closing speech for the goddess Diana, penned by playwright Kira Obolensky. It appears after Pericles comes to Diana’s temple in Ephesus and before his wife is revealed to him. In the 1609 play-text, Pericles hails the goddess and tells her: “I here confess myself the King of Tyre, / Who, frighted from my country, did espouse / The fair Thaisa at Pentapolis” (22.22–24). In 2016, the goddess interrupts his tale of woe and calls him out for all of his cowardly acts of abandonment:

Frighted from your country, indeed!
 Also frighted, it seems, from half the world.
 Pericles, I must amend the particulars of your tale.
 In many guises I have watched you ignore
 The misfortunes of women, wife and childe.

Look upon these you have slighted in the
Reckoning of your fateful journeys.
Antiochus's daughter – you fled in horror,
Abandoned her to a father both vicious and violent.
A true princely answer to the king's riddle
Might have ope'd her golden cage then.
But I rescued her with a firebolt.
And here is your own "maid child."
This Marina has by rude coincidence
Found her father, but "better stars" did not
Send her on her wretched journey.
Just a father's haste and neglect.
Abandoned for 16 years, that's the truth –
You condense her story only to its ending.⁵³

Hensley's production takes Jackson and Taylor's editorial work a crucial step closer toward recuperating the tale's suppressed traumas. It significantly "amends" Pericles's version of his story, and gives the goddess voice to report on his unkingly acts against the play's females. He "abandoned" Antiochus's daughter rather than freeing her from her father's violence and ignored his wife's misfortunes. Finally, she names Pericles's neglect of Marina as the root cause of his daughter's wretched plotline. As my analysis of buried histories suggests, plays are uniquely able not only to give traumatic stories voice and body, but also to push them further from sight and hearing. Hensley's attention to the play's violations of girls and women, and to her audience members' own potential experiences of "vicious and violent" abuse, is a reminder that theater is a living, elastic art form that is always being shaped by those who produce and witness its performances. And that, while a play may chronicle the unique cultural moment from which a single performance of it emerges, its themes can resonate across time and place in uncanny and uncomfortable ways.