INTRODUCTION

Staging memory

> Great is this force of memory, excessive great, O my God; a large and boundless chamber! who ever sounded the bottom thereof? yet this is a power of mine, and belongs unto my nature; nor do I myself comprehend all that I am. Therefore is the mind too strait to contain itself[.][1]

The materials of theatre are, for Shakespeare, the materials of memory.[2] On one level, this simply means that Shakespeare's theatre is a "remembrance environment": a place whose physical and social properties shape remembering, a place of mnemonic instruction and of recollection.[3] The influence of this concept of theatre can be felt in the "memory theatres" constructed by two of Shakespeare's British contemporaries, Robert Fludd and John Willis. Fludd and Willis depart from Continental tradition to design mnemonic spaces less like the Classical amphitheatre that was the model for the original "memory theatre" – Giulio Camillo's – than like the public theatres of early modern London.[4] But the function of this remembrance environment is not just to stimulate players' accurate recall of their parts or to provide the impetus and justification for visually emblematic staging.[5] The physical properties of the theatre – the space itself, the players, and the many stage properties used and reused from play to play – become the materials for a mnemonic dramaturgy that

[1] Augustine, *Confessions of St. Augustine*, translated by E. B. Pusey, 216.
[2] The phrase "the materials of memory" is drawn from the title of Ann Rosalind Jones' and Peter Stallybrass' book, *Renaissance Clothing*.
[3] Evelyn B. Tribble, "'The Dark Backward and Abysm of Time,'" 153–55 and *passim*.
[4] Johannes Host of Romberch also advises employing theatres, among other architectural spaces, as memory *loci*, and his concept of the mnemonic *res* is informed by theatrical performance. *Congestoriu[m] Artificiose Memorie* (Venice, 1520), sigs. B6v–7r.
[5] On the function of the "remembrance environment" of the theatre as a trigger for actors' memories, see Tribble, "Distributing Cognition in the Globe," 135–55. On mnemonic staging, see William E. Engel, "Mnemonic Criticism and Renaissance Literature," 12–33; Engel, *Mapping Mortality*; and Engel, *Death and Drama in Renaissance England*.

shapes language, character, and plot. As the plays enable remembering, so remembering shapes the formal qualities of the plays.

The props, the players, and the physical space of the stage provide the vocabulary of Shakespeare's memory theatre, but they do not function merely as physicalized reminders or mnemonic *res* in a literalized version of the memory artist's *locus* or place. Rather, in their frequent absence such objects become a way to evoke a mind and a past that move between the common (shared by the audience, staged elsewhere in the play) and the comparatively private (unstaged, but described in ways that evoke the physical materials of the stage). Something like fetishes, or like Joseph Roach's effigies,[6] these objects "body forth" an absence. Shakespeare's memory theatre consists of props that are not there (the wormwood that Juliet's Nurse applies to her breast; the "ill-shaped fishes" and other objects in the Apothecary's shop in *Romeo and Juliet*; in the Henry IV plays, the Hostess' parcel-gilt goblet, sea-coal fire, and dish of prawns; Hamlet's "table of my brain," Pyrrhus' "fathers flagge"; Lady Macbeth's child; Desdemona's handkerchief; Prospero's books), contained physical spaces located elsewhere than on the stage (the apothecary's shop, Ophelia's chamber, the garden in which Old Hamlet is killed, Prospero's "cell"), and props whose physical presence evokes physical absence (the "remembrances" returned to Hamlet by Ophelia, Yorick's skull, the portraits of Claudius and Old Hamlet, Hamlet's tables; Desdemona's handkerchief; Stephano's stolen wine in *The Tempest*) as well as persons who are also mnemonic devices (the dead princes in *Richard III*; messengers; Falstaff; the Hostess; Juliet's Nurse; Old Hamlet's Ghost, the Player, the Grave-digger; Ophelia, Gertrude; Desdemona; Lady Macbeth; Caliban, Sycorax) – some of whom are, some of whom are not physically present; many of whom bring with them a competing set of memories. Andrew Sofer has argued that certain stage props such as skulls and handkerchiefs carry with them a kind of theatrical memory;[7] what I argue is that, in Shakespeare's plays, the already theatrical methods of place-based mnemonics become a theatrical language in which an intangible and imagined past is made rhetorically present.

Key among these spaces and objects is the not-quite-empty space, the *locus*, of the female body.[8] (An etymological coincidence connects women's bodies to mnemonic "places": as well as signifying a "place" in

[6] On effigies, see Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 36–41.
[7] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*.
[8] On women as memory places, see Rhonda Lemke Sanford, *Maps and Memory in Early Modern England*, 27–74.

the memory arts, the word *locus*, as Helkiah Crooke notes, was a euphemism for the female genitalia.[9]) The presence of this space and object on the London public stages is a matter of theatrical and rhetorical artifice. According to at least one observer, this artifice works by stimulating, among other bodily functions, the player's memory: "[T]he apparell of wemen [on the stage] … is a great provocation of men to lust and leacherie: because a womans garment beeing put on a man doeth vehemently touch and moue him with the remembrance & imagination of a woman; and the imagination of a thing desirable doth stirr vp the desire."[10] The woman's body (contained, as it were, in the same physical space occupied by the man who is wearing a woman's clothing) is remembered first, desired second. This complementary cycle of remembering and desire makes the absent object a source of danger but also of theatrical elaboration: the player is "touch[ed]" and "moue[d]" by the talisman of clothing to construct the fiction of a female presence.

Constructed through remembering, female bodies also provide the vocabulary for understanding remembering. Shakespeare treats pregnancy as a metaphor for male thought, as in *Measure for Measure* ("This thought unshapes me quite, makes me unpregnant").[11] Female parturition, in turn, is a metaphor for men's (and for that matter women's) remembering. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Holofernes admits modestly,

> This is a gift that I have – simple, simple; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions. These are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of *pia mater* and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it. (4.2.65–71)[12]

The notion of memory as the "belly of the mind" is as old as Augustine. Augustine thinks of this "belly" (*venter*) as a digesting stomach. But for the Dominican Johannes de Sancto Geminiano (*c.*1260–1333), *venter* takes on its other meaning and becomes "that belly [*venter*] of a woman that we call the uterus where the fetus is completed: and, what is more, just as the fetus is conceived from the flesh of the uterus, so the words of the mind, which are like the offspring and childbirth of the

[9] See Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, sig. V3v.
[10] John Rainolds, *Th'ouerthrow of Stage-Playes*, 97.
[11] Mary Thomas Crane notes that "For Shakespeare, *pregnant* was a word that named the multiple ways that bodies are penetrated by the external world and produce something – offspring, ideas, language – as a result of that penetration." *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory*, 159.
[12] Quotations from *Love's Labour's Lost* follow H. R. Woudhuysen's third-series Arden edition. On Holofernes' memory, see also Pierre Iselin, "Myth, Memory and Music," in *Reclamations of Shakespeare*, edited by A. J. Hoenselaars, 177.

memory, are conceived from the memory."[13] Not content with mere likenesses, Holofernes pursues the implications of the childbirth simile. The objects washed around in the "foolish extravagant spirit" or the animal spirits of Holofernes' brain recall the language of the memory arts and of faculty psychology: "forms, figures, shapes, objects," and "ideas" suggest the *res*, the mnemonically charged "things" or objects placed in a memory *locus*; "apprehensions, motions," and "revolutions" suggest the memory artist's habit of "noting" as well as the movement of the animal spirits through the ventricles of the brain. Holofernes presents this skill as *invention*, but the close association between invention and remembering in the period – to say nothing of the mnemonic parentage of Holofernes' "forms, figures, shapes, objects" – makes his invention indistinguishable from recollection. (Because it "wander[s] about," recollection was often thought of as a function of the "vnderstanding" – the invention – rather than the more stable memory.[14]) Holofernes' "foolish *extravagant* spirit" (that is, wandering spirit) engages in the rhetorical trope of *dilatio*: the digression or "wander[ing] about" that was also known as the "Rahab trope" (from *broad* or *wide*, the English translation of the prostitute Rahab's name, as well as her profession) and was associated in the early modern period with sexually and socially uncontrolled "wandering" – or, in a Latinism appropriate to the pedantic Holofernes, extra-vagant – women.[15]

When located in the body of an actual woman, such wandering, mental or physical, was frowned upon: as Juan Luis Vives puts it, "Womans thought is swifte / and for y[e] most parte vnstable / walkyng and wandring out from home / and sone wyl slyde / by the reason of it owne slypernes / I wote nat howe far."[16] The slippery quality of female thought is, for Vives, the material cause of moral "slyd[yng]." The rhetorical trope of *dilatio* encodes female talkativeness and feared female sexuality in a subject, rhetoric, which was typically excluded from female education on the grounds that it was a public art and women were meant to be private and not to be found "walkyng and wandring out from home."[17] Male students of rhetoric were meant to master the ability to "wander" rhetorically, but such wandering was thought of as a feminine trait and controlled through

[13] Johannes de Sancto Geminiano, *Summa de Exemplis ac Similitudinibus Rerum*, 245. See also Lodovico Dolce, *Dialogo del Modo*, edited by Andrea Torre, 31. All translations not otherwise attributed are my own.
[14] William Fulwod, *The Castel of Memorie*, sig. E6v.
[15] Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, 9–10, 105.
[16] Juan Luis Vives, *A Very frutefull and Pleasant Boke*, sigs. C2v–3r.
[17] Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, 104.

skills gendered male. In rhetorical training, "questions of decorum and control" were masculine: reflecting the theory that male form gave shape to female matter in the womb, a male rhetor would speak of making a rhetorical "point" from errant female *materia*.[18]

But Holofernes' description of his own mental processes all but excludes this controlling male force: the male begetter is elided through the passive voice (Holofernes' inventions "are begot"), while the brain itself becomes female, a creature whose "womb" Holofernes identifies as the area of the brain sometimes equated with the ventricle of memory, the *pia mater*: the "pious" or "conserving mother" who nourishes Holofernes' thoughts. As a tutor, Holofernes takes part in the Elizabethan practice of educating boys separately from girls and away from the distrusted female pedagogy of their mothers and other women. The wandering or "extravagant spirit" that fills Holofernes' brain, however, gives a distinctly feminine cast to his supposedly masculine, Latin-laden mind. As he exercises his most "acute" mental "gift," his brain is a mother, his use of that brain a birth.

In the vocabulary of the memory arts, the gathering of materials that will become "forms, figures, shapes, objects," and "ideas" is "noting," a word that provides Shakespeare with one of his famous quibbles. The pun on "noting" and "nothing" (pronounced indistinguishably in Elizabethan and Jacobean England) conflates a key skill in male mnemonic practice with the female genitalia. A habit of "noting" teaches an intellectual receptivity which lays the groundwork for later feats of invention and remembering. When he recalls the apothecary's shop, Romeo twice refers to earlier acts of "noting" which enable him to remember: the apothecary's shop is something "which late [he] noted"; "noting [the apothecary's] penury," Romeo concluded that the shop might provide illegal poisons, and he recalls that conclusion when he recalls the location of the shop. In the first Quarto, Hamlet, similarly, describes his early education as the result of "noting": "From the tables of my memory," he vows, "I'll wipe away / All saws of book, all trivial fond conceits / That ever youth or else observance noted" (5.74–76).[19]

Such a construction of thought begs the question whether the mind is merely receptive, making only the most direct of deductions from the materials gathered, or whether it more actively shapes these materials – whether, in fact, the mind is an Aristotelian womb, merely sheltering and providing

[18] *Ibid.*, 107, 120–25.
[19] Quotations from *Hamlet* Q1 follow Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor's edition for the Arden Shakespeare, *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*.

food for the male seed, or whether it contributes something to the process, as the female body, as some argued, contributes "female seed" to the formation of the fetus. Ophelia's "nothing"/"noting" is a key example. Ophelia "think[s] nothing" (*Hamlet* 3.2.111), representing her own thought as a non-condemning, non-desiring blank, a mental state that Hamlet equates with her genitalia: what "lie[s] between maids' legs" is also "nothing" (3.2.112, 114). It is also true, however, that Ophelia "thinks, noting," and that the object of her cognitively charged gaze is Hamlet himself.

The clown's "jests" are another "nothing" constructed by "noting" the errant *materia* of the audience and turning it back on them – a function gradually absorbed by Burbage's heroes from the clown in whom it originates. Like Richard Tarlton, Will Kemp, the clown of the Lord Chamberlain's Men through the 1590s, was well known for his "jests."[20] While jigs were Kemp's more distinctive stock-in-trade, Kemp was described by Thomas Nashe as "Iest-monger and Vice-gerent generall to the ghost of Dicke Tarlton."[21] "Jests" are made from the gathered materials of the audience's wit, and this collaborative improvisation led clowns to wander from the plot of the play. In *As You Like It*, this professional skill is linked conceptually to female extravagance: Touchstone (one of Kemp's roles) is called a wandering wit ("How now, wit, whither wander you?"; 1.2.54–55); so are sexually uncontrolled women ("Wit, whither wilt?"; 4.1.156).[22] It is the clown, as well, who "in his brain, / Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit / After a voyage … hath strange places crammed / With observation, the which he vents / In mangled forms" (*As You Like It* 2.7.38–42). The clown's wit is "mangled" remembering; in turn, it is noted and remembered by the audience: in the first ("bad") Quarto of *Hamlet*, Hamlet complains that a clown "keeps one suit of jests – as a man is known by one suit of apparel – and gentlemen quotes his jests down in their tables before they come to the play" (9.29–32). Since the audience's preoccupation with recalling and recording "jests" has the potential to compromise or even destroy the integrity of the plot, Hamlet condemns this practice. Written in portable, erasable notebooks, the clown's "jests" are carried, literally, by the audience from playhouse to street to home to public square. In fact, it seems that the "gentlemen" recall the clown's jests and write them down "*before*" they arrive at the playhouse: they recall an enjoyed performance and anticipate more of the same. The audience's recollection of jests represents a broader way of thinking about the theatrical

[20] David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown*, 11–23, 38.
[21] Thomas Nashe, *An Almond for a Parrat*, sig. A2r.
[22] Quotations from *As You Like It* follow Juliet Dusinberre's edition for the Arden Shakespeare.

experience, one not bound within the fictional confines of the "two hours' traffic" of a single play or the walls of the playhouse. Shakespeare encodes this fear in the Henry IV plays and *Henry V* when he sets the clown (Falstaff) and his jests in direct and deliberate conflict with what might be seen as the "necessary point" (*Hamlet* Q1 9.27) of these history plays, the creation of the man who will be Henry V. In the epilogue to *2 Henry IV*, Kemp, at least, anticipates that the audience will return to the playhouse not to see this "necessary point" but to see Falstaff.

The act of remembering evokes not only female and non-standard male rhetorical habits but the physical processes of the female body. The "natural" undiscipline of the female body presents a threat to the male bodily discipline that is fundamental to the arts of memory. The prevailing discourse of memory in the period prescribes (rather than describes) a specifically male memory defined by education, discipline, and selection.[23] The need for order sits uneasily with the physical makeup of the memory, located in the rearmost of approximately three "ventricles" or cavities that held the "faculties" of the rational soul: imagination or common sense, understanding or invention, and memory.[24] The liquidity of the animal spirits that fill these ventricles, as well as the physical nature of memory itself, worries many early modern physiologists. The construction of memory images and places is, at least in part, a defense against what John Sutton describes as "the dirt added to thoughts by the body."[25] While Sutton has since revised this early reading of the memory arts to suggest that, rather than simply cleaning up the memory, their conceptual externalization of the processes of memory is a version of the "extended mind," the sense that bodily confusion is excluded by the memory arts remains valid. Similarly, Sullivan notes that, for the arts of memory, bodily discipline is as important as mental discipline, and that the discipline is for men rather than women: a well-regulated memory "connotes the maintenance of corporeal and psychic orderliness, the regulated nature of one's thinking mirrored in and maintained by the propriety of one's lifestyle; it is also assumed to be linked to, if not constitutive of, an idealized

[23] John Sutton, "Body, Mind, and Order," in *1543 and All That*, edited by Freeland and Corones, 119, 121, 125, 142n, and *passim*; see also Sutton, *Philosophy and Memory Traces*, 43, 49.

[24] The number of ventricles can vary. See Katharine Park, "The Organic Soul," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, edited by Schmitt *et al.*, 464–84; G. W. Bruyn, "The Seat of the Soul," in *Historical Aspects of the Neurosciences*, edited by Rose and Bynum, 55–81; and Walter Pagel, "Medieval and Renaissance Contributions," in *History and Philosophy of Knowledge*, edited by Poynter, 95–114.

[25] Sutton, "Body, Mind, and Order," 129. See also Bruce R. Smith, "Speaking what we Feel about *King Lear*," in *Shakespeare, Memory and Performance*, edited by Holland, 25–28.

conception of masculinity."[26] Intruding on this carefully mapped, dephysicalized space, unordered recollection undermines this "idealized … masculinity"; intruding on masculine order, the originators of such recollection are women and clowns. As I will demonstrate, many educated males in Shakespeare's plays (including Romeo, Hamlet, and Prospero) show signs of having been trained in the arts of memory. As male bodily discipline breaks down in Shakespeare's memory theatre, accurate and orderly reporting of offstage events gives way to the rhetorical circulation of *dilatio*. The result is that in Shakespeare's plays women teach educated men how to think.

WOMEN TEACHING MEN

> I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.
>
> (1 Timothy 2:12; Authorized Version)

These elements – unstaged physical and theatrical materials, gendered origins, women who are instructors in remembering – shape the mnemonically charged encounter between Richard III and his brother's widow, Elizabeth. Here, two "tell-tale women" (4.4.150) physically halt Richard's progress across the stage; "copious in exclaims" (l. 135), their extravagant remembering interrupts his forward progress toward a more secure kingship.[27] The subject of Richard's debate with Elizabeth is the contested mnemonic space of the female body, specifically the dynastically significant body of Elizabeth's daughter. Richard's habit of swearing by Saint Paul, whose restrictive view of women's role in Christian worship shaped two millennia of Christian practice, does not prevent him from asking for something Paul explicitly forbids: instruction by women. Richard's hope to "learn of" Elizabeth (l. 268) how he might woo her daughter is answered with instruction in remembering. When he asks to "learn," Richard enters a pedagogical environment in which memory is central to the curriculum and women – extravagantly "railing" women peripheral to the new social order created by the Yorkists – are teachers.

Richard enters a memory lesson already in progress. Margaret, who, as the female remainder of the defeated Lancastrian dynasty, works to maintain their memory among the Yorkist conquerors, has finally found students. As a memory pedagogue, Margaret instructs her onstage audience

[26] Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., *Memory and Forgetting*, 39.
[27] Quotations from *Richard III* follow Antony Hammond's second-series Arden edition.

not only *what* they are to remember (the deaths by their hands of her husband, Henry VI, and of their son Edward) but *how* they are to remember. Following the deaths of her own sons and her husband, Edward IV, Elizabeth accosts Margaret:

> O thou, well skilled in curses, stay awhile
> And teach me how to curse mine enemies.
> MARGARET: Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;
> Compare dead happiness with living woe;
> Think that thy babes were sweeter than they were,
> And he that slew them fouler than he is:
> Bettering thy loss makes the bad-causer worse.
> Revolving this will teach thee how to curse.
> ELIZABETH: My words are dull; O quicken them with thine.
> MARGARET: Thy woes will make them sharp and pierce like mine.
> (4.4.116–25)

Three key precepts emerge from Margaret's instruction: first, remembering is inventive; second, it bears an intimate relationship to the female business of child-bearing and the nurturing of children; third, remembering is circular and dilatory; it "revolv[es]." Learning to remember is learning to curse (something Caliban also learns, from Prospero, and teaches him in turn). While it is commonplace to speak of a keen mind, and specifically a keen memory, as "quick" and "sharp" – Willis, for example, argues that by daily practice "*the memorie … is … much quickned in her dutie, and the wit the more sharpened*"[28] – Elizabeth's wish to be "quicken[ed]" also suggests the "quickening" of a child in the womb. Asked by Elizabeth to bring her "dull" words to fruition, Margaret insists that Elizabeth's own "woes," not a teacher, will make her remember as she wishes to do. In instructing Elizabeth to "[t]hink that [her] babes were sweeter than they were," Margaret teaches her not just to remember them with advantages but to exaggerate their essential qualities, making them function as mnemonic *res* – the excessively beautiful, ugly, violent, or painful images that shape the arts of memory. Margaret's is not, however, the comparatively bloodless rhetorical art of memory taught by men to other men. For men who practice the memory arts, as I will argue in the following chapter, the passionate affect of the mnemonic image merely provides a means of stimulating the memory, and the possibility that such images could distract rather than discipline the memory is a constant threat. But rather than extracting passion from the act of

[28] John Willis, *The Art of Memory* (1621); facsimile edition, sig. A4v. Italics in original.

remembrance, Elizabeth and Margaret work to increase their passion, to make it "sharp and pierce." The zeugma makes the passion sword-like in quality (it is "sharp") and in action (it "pierces"); passion can be wielded by the rememberer but also has agency in its own right. For these female rememberers, the passionate affect of the mnemonic image is not just a tool for remembering but an end in itself.

The lesson is effective: taught by Margaret, Elizabeth remembers against, not with, the memory-colonizing Richard III. Faced with his demand for her daughter's hand in marriage, Elizabeth suggests that he woo her daughter with the bloody relics of their common past:

> Send to her, by the man that slew her brothers,
> A pair of bleeding hearts; thereon engrave
> 'Edward' and 'York'. Then haply will she weep;
> Therefore present to her – as sometimes Margaret
> Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood –
> A handkerchief: which, say to her, did drain
> The purple sap from her sweet brother's body,
> And bid her wipe her weeping eyes withal.
> (4.4.271–78)

Richard has already invoked the Yorkists' sorrow over the death of Rutland in his wooing of Anne (1.2.159–62). Rutland reappears not simply as common memory but as a recalled or imagined stage prop, the bloody handkerchief. This handkerchief, different versions of which recur in Elizabethan plays as emblems of revenge, is the focus of York's grief in *3 Henry VI*. The handkerchief does not appear in the chronicles. As such, it offers a specifically theatrical memory of this scene.[29] The emblematic "bleeding hearts" literalize lovers' rhetoric and the murders of Edward and York; the messenger, Tyrrell, would recall by his physical presence the act that anchors Elizabeth's memory. The lovers' "remembrances" evoked by Elizabeth, in other words, call up a common *theatrical* past that extends beyond *Richard III* to include other plays in the first tetralogy. These imagined objects prompt both the audience and the players to remember past performances. While they are constructed rhetorically rather than present physically on the stage, these objects nonetheless

[29] In Hall, Rutland is killed by Clifford, who "bad [Rutland's] Chappeleyn bere the erles mother and brother worde what he had done, and sayde," and Clifford later finds the corpse of the Duke of York and sends his head, crowned with a paper crown, to Queen Margaret. Holinshed's account is similar, but he notes that "[S]ome write that the duke [of York] was taken alive, and in derision caused to stand upon a molehill, on whose head they put a garland in steed of a crowne[.]" Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, III, 178, 210.