

## **Toward a Blue Gender Studies: The Sea, Diana, and Feminine Virtue in *Pericles*<sup>1</sup>**

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“Perform my bidding, or thou liv’st in woe” (5.1.242). These are the ominously terse lines the goddess Diana delivers to Pericles in act 5 of William Shakespeare and George Wilkins’s play by the same name. The titular character hears the music of the spheres and lapses into a deep sleep. Pericles’s companions exit the stage, and down descends the goddess Diana to dispel and rehabilitate the misrule of the sea’s fatal blows. She cautions the incumbent king to “perform my bidding” and return to her temple at Ephesus, where Thaisa, Pericles’s wife long thought to be dead, resides as a priestess. This is no empty gesture. As Diana makes clear, the difference between happiness and “woe” is at stake, and her transcendental powers reign supreme (5.1.241). Pericles, shaken and awed by this “goddess argentine,” obediently replies to “Celestial Dian” and

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<sup>2</sup> The blue humanities “name an off-shore trajectory that places cultural history in an oceanic rather than terrestrial context.” See “Shakespeare and the Blue Humanities” <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/725101> Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

makes haste for the near-East city after he awakens from his slumber (5.1.237). This vision stands in stark contrast to the “crosses,” or tribulations, of Pericles’s life and loss to “masked Neptune,” whose whims have ripped the Prince of Tyre from his wife and child (3.3.37). Diana’s vision as a “Celestial” goddess also reinforces the deity’s place in the cosmic system of the play. Not only is she aware of Pericles’s “woe,” but she is also able to quell it by the power of her “silver bow” (5.1.235). This theophany scene reinforces Diana’s exceptional influence over the environment in *Pericles*, even as the chaos of the sea’s vicissitudes reach their climax.

At first glance it would appear that the sea and moon act independently of one another in *Pericles*; admittedly, the push-pull dynamic between Diana and the sea throughout the play is not immediately obvious. However, the play’s emphasis on tides strongly recalls the specter of the moon, one of Diana’s three identities in early modern mythology, and its hidden influence on the earth below. Certainly, if current critical trends are any indication, then studying the sea’s vicissitudes is of utmost analytical importance. For example, so-called “blue humanities” has led the charge of understanding in greater depth the porous ontological divide between human and inhuman life forms and the instability that arises from human interaction with an environment hostile to human life. This field of inquiry has recently turned critics’ attention to the vast literary works that take place on the wide expanse of the ocean, breathing new life, so to speak, into Shakespeare’s “blue” plays, *Pericles* among them. Moreover, in the past two decades, *Pericles* has received an unprecedented amount of attention in comparison to its prior critical treatment. At the turn of the twenty-first century, David Skeeel, the editor of *Pericles: Critical Essays*, saw fit to sincerely defend the work after detailing the multifarious ways in which it has been disparaged and praised, razed and rehabilitated, over the course of four centuries. In part, this critical ambivalence about the play has been a product of uncertainty about how it should be epistemologically categorized: is it romance or tragicomedy, and does it matter? “The need for a respectable paradigm that could accommodate the play’s strangeness,” Skeeel writes, “was apparent in much of its earliest criticism as some of the most egregious faults found by commentators were later admitted to be quite natural to the genre of romance” (14). These supposedly “egregious” errors mimic the play’s tidal

rhythm, once seen as a deficit. The play's supposed deficiency—namely its refusal to adhere to the neo-classical unity of time—has instead become the merit of *Pericles's* dynamism. Its multi-year saga across time and space mimetically underscores the tidal metronome of the play's most formidable foe: the sea itself. Therefore, *Pericles* has attracted a large amount of scholarly attention, and as critical conversations have shown, the preoccupation with *Pericles's* need for a “respectable paradigm” is itself worthy of study and remains far from settled.

More recently, Shakespeare scholars have sought to understand the environmental past through our environmental present with respect to what Dan Brayton calls a “thalassalogical” turn. Brayton's 2012 book *Shakespeare's Ocean* maps the historical, textual, and material intersections into Shakespeare's works and the increasingly “global ocean” (1); this oceanic turn builds upon the magisterial studies that Steve Mentz has proffered in the past decade. Mentz has dubbed this emerging field the “blue cultural studies,” which he reiterated recently as the “off-shore trajectory that places cultural history in an oceanic rather than terrestrial context” (28). Mentz's vision for a blue humanities seeks, like the genre of romance itself, to elevate the critical allure of stories that center unlikely heroes portrayed in the throes of nature's violent trials. This line of thought has been useful for twenty-first-century scholars to think through the issues that impact our increasingly interconnected world as we begin to see the devastating consequences of a globalized industrial economy affected by climate change: famine, extreme weather, and above all else, rising sea levels. As recently as 2019, literary critic Joseph Campana reminds us of the immediate importance that studying Shakespeare's oceans affords. As his city (and mine) found itself embroiled in the long recovery of Hurricane Harvey's catastrophic flooding, Campana turns to the English playwright: “Shakespeare's most often-troubled waters, with their dramatic storms and shipwrecks, force us to wonder what to do with our own taste for exotic seascapes and terrifying encounters. In so doing they both tap into ancient preoccupations and precondition subsequent seaside contemplations” (419). This prescient reminder of “ancient preoccupation” recalls *Pericles's* setting in the late antique Mediterranean basin, in a time when the vicissitudes of nature were deeply tied to the reciprocal, yet often senseless interactions between man and god, between mundane and supramundane.

Amid all these interventions, however, there persists in *Pericles* a troubling aspect of the sea, the “blue.” It is not news that the sea’s characterization as a rapaciously violent entity bears striking resemblance to the lechery endemic to the Roman sea-god Neptune. Ignoring this crucial aspect of the sea, however, is potentially dangerous. Not only does this erasure elide the very real linguistic coding of sexual violence that the sea brokers throughout the play, but it also flattens the gendered implications of early modern nature into one amorphous, asexual identity. To mediate this potential pitfall, this essay offers an alternative: by refocusing our attention on the lunar goddess and her ability to control the sea’s fickle behavior, I argue that Diana’s repeatedly invoked presence in the play offers a mollifying balm to the narrative’s ongoing trauma. Moreover, I aver that it is the goddess’s association with the moon in particular that accomplishes this dramatic feat. Remarkably in *Pericles*, the masculine sea ultimately cedes power and control to Diana’s vestal femininity when the sea, for once, cooperates and delivers Pericles and Marina, his and Thaisa’s daughter, to Diana’s temple at Ephesus. I do not see this episode as a coincidence, for *Pericles* was likely first performed around 1608, during the very era that natural philosophical understandings of the moon’s relationship to the earth began to shift. Following Brayton’s and Mentz’s leads, this paper thus rides the thalassalogical wave of the emerging blue humanities, while at the same time acknowledging the danger of flattening the sea into a sexless monolith.

At stake here is the potential elision of language that intently describes the impending threat of violence against women. In our commitments to studying this “off-shore trajectory,” I do not want to take this characterization of the sea for granted. Rather, I highlight the gendered significance of the tidal economy in *Pericles* to draw attention to the gender theories that early modern mythological conventions provide. Indeed, the sea in *Pericles* is constantly figured as a concupiscent force threatening to upend the virginity and chastity of Marina and Thaisa, respectively. Thus, I propose an addendum to our current “blue cultural studies” model by offering a blue *gender* studies: an expansion of our current critical vocabulary that acknowledges the dangerous associations of the sea with sexual violence at the same time that it refuses to accept its ominous presence as mere symbolic convention. This essay thus endeavors to

understand the undercurrent of Diana's influence more fully. Diana's powers firstly protect Marina from sexual violence, secondly cloister Thaisa in the vestal stasis of Diana's Ephesian temple, and thirdly rehabilitate the bonds of family in the final act of the play. With these events in mind, I show how the tripartite Diana's identity as the lunar deity deserves sustained critical attention, especially with respect to her antidotal counteraction to the sea's menacing violence. This article investigates early modern perspectives on the moon's relationship to the earth's oceanography, and in turn, as will hopefully become clearer, it will reveal the ideological importance of Diana's supreme, yet quiet governance as the play reaches its narrative apogee in act 5. To put it simply, I take Diana's powers referenced throughout the play literally and read them as an occulted agent that pushes and pulls the characters across the tempestuous Mediterranean basin.

### **Romance as a Feminized Genre**

Given that the genre of romance itself addresses the constant quest-driven wanderings of an errant individual, the critical disagreement over *Pericles's* categorization might be the most beneficial place to start. Genre studies has been a fruitful avenue for literary critics to investigate *Pericles*. Literary critic Lori Humphrey Newcomb, for example, carefully examines Shakespeare's potential sources for *Pericles* in an attempt to understand how the genre is feminized in comparison to other genres. Linking Shakespearean feminist scholarship to the romance genre, Newcomb reminds us that romance "challenges traditional literary values with its loose formal structure, its apparent freedom from political or didactic purpose, its proliferation of related tales across space and time and vernaculars, and its allegedly addictive grip on readers" (22). For Patricia Parker, romance is "inescapable" and refuses to be restrained to one specific generic convention. Barbara Fuchs' poststructuralist critique of romance, moreover, renders the genre as a procedure that invites "idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering and obscured identity ... [to] pose a quest and complicate it" (9). This commitment to "idealization" throws the genre in stark relief to Shakespeare's canonical plays like *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, or *Macbeth*—all three of which eschew the "marvelous" quest-based narratives in favor of positing political theology, as well as

portraying the fragile human subject under mental and existential siege. As a result, Newcomb contends that over the long arc of critical history, Shakespearean romances have been feminized and discarded: they exhibit a genre of mere “stories” and “tales,” meant to dazzle the senses, not engage in what is conceived as more serious, and therefore masculine, inquiry (22).

Newcomb also exposes some potential “gender trouble” when looking more critically into the language of source studies, the nucleic core of romance. Because source studies begins with the inclination that lesser sources combine to make a greater whole, an immediate binary emerges: “their allegedly immature or feminine prose counterparts,” or romance, inevitably graduates to “Shakespearean *virtù*,” or a more masculine identity (22). This “feminization” of romance as a literary category, Newcomb argues, is what has hindered earlier scholars from a more productive analysis of *Pericles*. Adding to the mix of this troublesome play is the fact that the work is encoded with an invisible feminine force that refuses to fall prey to the violent and rapturous effects of the sea. I maintain that this encoding is endemic to Diana’s feminine powers, and as I demonstrate in the following pages, Diana’s associations with the moon explain both the characters’ frequent appeals to the goddess at the same time that *Pericles* is massively preoccupied with the sea’s vicissitudes.

In my quest to understand feminine agency, it might seem unusual to discuss a play that is centered almost entirely around the male titular character Pericles. However, if romance as a generic convention problematizes “traditional literary values,” as Newcomb puts it, what might this intervention reveal about *Pericles* and the persistence of the female characters throughout it? The play’s emphasis on the revival and protection of female characters makes studies in gender, sexuality, and masculinity particularly opportune for scholarly advancement. More specifically, ecofeminist theory has much to offer a work like *Pericles*. Literary critic Miriam Kammer argues that the play functions as an ecodrama, a production that highlights the potent connections between the human and natural worlds: “the play is not an individualized tale of one man’s life but rather a more complex story of multiple agents moving in and through an ecological system” (30). This complex interrelation between human, nonhuman, and environment—“multiple agents”—is on full display in a play as disorienting as *Pericles*. Therefore,

Kammer emphasizes the importance of ecofeminist theory as a way to “interrogate a range of connections and entanglements between culture and nature while keeping gender—and the perils associated with it—in close consideration” (30). To accomplish this interrogation, we must keep in mind these enmeshed discourses between gender and nature as we read the play. In turn, if we interrogate this “range of connections and entanglements” between nature and gender, we then become equipped with the ability to avoid those associated “perils.”

As Kammer also explains, our gendered humanness often disrupts the feminist critique of nature, a topic in which a number of scholars are invested. Material-feminist Vicki Kirby avers that nature and the body have so often been conflated with “woman, the feminine, the primordial, with unruly passion and the ‘dark continent’—all signs of primitive deficiency” that we run the risk of backsliding into a system that relies on the supposedly “more rational and evolved presence” of masculinist control and subjugation (215). As an alternative strategy, ecofeminism promises to provide a countermove for advancing a new understanding of nature as a “dynamic agent,” an entity that has the capacity to act upon human subjects rather than recede into the background as “inert, static,” and therefore dominated, “matter” (Kammer 31). Kammer’s work reminds us that an ecofeminist interpretation of Shakespeare’s works can also mitigate these potential shortcomings. In particular, ecofeminist critique provides an alternative philosophical history to Western philosophy, offering an alternative to fundamental dualism, rationalism, and humans’ superiority to nonhuman life forms. I see these facets of ecofeminist critique taking place not just in Diana’s theophany scene, but in her occulted machinations throughout the play as well.

What is more, Mentz’s prolific scholarship on early modern ecology has offered a potentially holistic understanding of an ecofeminist ecology, one that prevails on the “triple pillars of ecological cognition—interconnectedness, persistence in space, and the decentering of heroic individualism” (168). Diana, I would argue, accomplishes all three. Mentz’s work also reveals the ecological interdependency between biotic and abiotic elements that are necessary to sustain life and ensure environmental stasis. Furthermore, this impulse to decenter also speaks to the growing body of research in an adjacent field of inquiry, posthumanism. As Campana and Scott Maisano show in their

magisterial introduction to *Renaissance Posthumanism* (2016), contemporary posthumanists have assumed that the early modern period and its development of humanist curricula provide a static, closed-circuit set of ideas. The assumption among these theorists, they argue, is that because these thinkers ascribed to humanism, they were also ignorant of the human's fragile position in a massive universe. Instead, Campana and Maisano remind us that "ideas of 'the human' [were] at once embedded and embodied *in*, evolving *with*, and de-centered *amid* a weird tangle of animals, environments, and vital materiality" (3). My reading here of *Pericles* addresses this "weird tangle" at the same time that it draws our attention to the early modern understandings of nature and its analogic relationship to ancient Roman mythology. It also leads us to investigate the more ephemeral, nonhuman agents in the play, such as Diana's incredible divine power and influence throughout the duration of the play's drama.

This article thus takes these threads of current conversations in *Pericles* and pivots them to argue that the "natural forces" in the play are not the amorphous actions of an asexual sea, as blue cultural studies might currently portray. Rather, I suggest that Diana's motive, divine intervention functions to further elevate the status of feminine virtue in the play, a counteraction to the brutality of the masculine sea. To make my case, I turn to Diana's main purpose in the narrative: to shield the women in *Pericles* from harm, rape, and further trauma. Moreover, I suggest that Diana's association with the moon is perhaps her most influential side of the goddess's tripartite identity; the moon, for example, controls the tides, a cryptic side of Diana's powers that has escaped sustained critical attention in literary studies with respect to *Pericles*. This lunar bond between Diana and the sea not only suggests a feminine-masculine dualism at play in *Pericles*, but also offers a reading of Diana's agentive sovereignty as moon deity, the powers of which appear to fundamentally hold the sea's violence in check throughout the second half of the drama. This reading of Diana further links ecofeminism to studies in blue Shakespeare by explicitly engaging with Diana's control over the mundane world. In so doing, my reading emphasizes the sea's rapacious masculine appetites that Shakespeare deploys. It also suggests that a feminine virtue, Diana's, flows throughout the play's chance encounters, familial reconciliation, and tidal raptures, the



interconnected relationship between literary descriptions of the sea and early modern expressions of masculine desire.

### Of Moon and Man

In late Elizabethan and early Stuart English texts, it is common to see Diana referenced in distinct opposition to the sea. Drawing on a wide range of classical and post-classical sources, writers define and understand Diana and her tripartite associations with the moon, earth, and the underworld within the context of the natural world. Take, for example, Robert Allott's compendium of English poetry, *Englands Parnassus, or the Choyssest Flowers of Our Moderne Poets* (1600), in which printed excerpts from various poetic works are collated and organized under topic heads (378). Several contemporary poems take up the relationship between Diana and the notoriously lecherous Neptune in an attempt to blend expositions of the natural world by pairing "*Mountaines, Groues, Seas, Springs, Riuers*" with poetical "*Bewties*." On Neptune, English poet and clergyman Charles Fitzgeoffrey writes:

O Neptune, neuer like thy selfe in shew,  
Inconstant, variable, mutable,  
How doost thou Proteus like thy forme renewe,  
O whereto is thy change impu[t]able?  
Or whereunto art thou bent sutable?  
Rightly the Moone predominateth thee.  
(p. 372)

In the propensity to "neuer like thy selfe ... shew," Fitzgeoffrey's Neptune resembles the "masked Neptune" that tortures Pericles in act 3. Similar to his offspring Proteus, Neptune is unpredictable—"inconstant, variable, mutable"—and dangerous. Neptune's metamorphic characteristics baffle the speaker, who asks from where the sea-god's changes shall be "impu[t]able," or held accountable, and how his behavior, "thou bent," will be constrained. The "Moone," the speaker resolves, "rightly ... predominateth" him. Diana's capacity to bend Neptune to her will offsets the frightening reverberations of a tempestuous sea that had the capacity to rend massive merchant ships completely in half. As the spirit Ariel describes to Prospero in *The Tempest* act 1, "most mighty Neptune / Seem[s] to besiege and make his bold waves tremble," while shaking his

“dread trident” and swiftly overthrowing the ship containing Prospero’s political enemies (1.2.204-206). Is it any wonder that early moderns looked to external influences in hopes that the sea could somehow be contained and mitigated?

What is more, Fitzgeoffrey’s reading of the protean water-deity recalls another early modern poetic work, Edmund Spenser’s 1590 *Faerie Queene*, wherein Proteus suddenly rescues Florimell from some fishermen eager to rape her. As soon as he rescues the maiden, however, Proteus’s demeanor changes quickly from savior to assaulter. The sea-god, “that old leachour,” ties “the virgin” to his chariot “with bold assault” (FQ 3.8.62). Here, in both Spenser and Fitzgeoffrey, Proteus and Neptune are collapsed into one entity. As Spenserian critic Supriya Chaudhuri comments in the *Spenser Encyclopedia*, Spenser’s Proteus “combines the behavior of father and son,” turning both sea-gods into lecherous assaulters (560). Two decades ago, Katherine Eggert emphasized the importance of identifying allegorical rape as a major component to the *Faerie Queene*’s poetic project, “a metaphorical vector [that] is meant to redirect our attention ... from one literary form to another” (4). In *Pericles*, the inverse appears to be true; rather, the *absence* of rape is what drives forward the play’s narrative suspense.

Gervase Markham, an Elizabethan- and Stuart-era poet and writer, describes “the siluer Moone” as “dread soueraigne of the deepe,” which echoes Leontes’s description of the sea as the “dreadful Neptune” in *The Winter’s Tale* (5.1.153). By the moon’s “waine,” the “ebs” of the sea follow suit in Markham’s telling (p. 355). Similarly, George Chapman describes the female deity as “Natures bright eye-sight” and the “soule” of the night. With her “triple forehead”—or tripartite nature as Cynthia/Phoebe, Diana, and Persephone—she “doost controule / Earth, seas and hell” (p. 356). The goddess is again described as ameliorative, a “Glorious Nurse of all this lower frame,” in poet-clergyman Nathaniel Baxter’s *Sir Philip Sydneys Ouránia That Is, Endimions Song and Tragedie, Containing All Philosophie* (1598). Baxter similarly describes Diana as a supreme sovereign authority, where “All things upon, and all within the round, / Vnto her Soueraigtie are deeply bound” (p. D1r). He continues:

She waggoneth to Neptunes Pallace than  
That wonneth in the mightie Ocean:  
She views the Creekes, Ports, Havens and Towers,  
And giues them Floods and Ebbs at certaine hours.  
(sig. D1r)

Once with Neptune, Diana becomes benthic: she searches “the Cauerns of the deepe” and “views the bottom of the Ocean, / Where never walked mortall living man” (sig. D1v and D1r). Baxter’s poetry makes clear that Diana as the moon controls the sea, to which she alone “gives dayly motion.” Her power to “ebbe and flowe to voyde corruption” is particularly intriguing to my argument, especially given Diana’s sudden appearance in act 5 that undoes the corroded familial bonds between Pericles, Thaisa, and their daughter Marina. To further illustrate the goddess’s powers, everything Neptune has “said, or done,” is for the sake of Diana’s glory. In Baxter’s words, Neptune exists to “demonstrate the glorie of the Moone,” Diana herself (sig. D1v). Lastly, as Baxter’s speaker makes clear, “no man, or woman / Nor any thing” on earth is above the power of Diana’s reach of her “mighty power” (sig. D2r). Diana is supreme authority.

The moon’s sovereign powers over the sea are well documented elsewhere in Shakespeare’s oeuvre. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Titania describes the moon as “the governess of floods,” an ameliorative power able to “wash[] all the air” from “rheumatic diseases that do abound” (2.1.103-105). Camillo, King Leontes’s servant in *The Winter’s Tale*, tells Polixenes, “You may as well / Forbid the sea for to obey the moon,” than succeed in assuaging the monarch’s jealous rage. The moon is also such a powerful force over Earth’s natural causes. In *The Tempest*, Prospero shows a rare moment of vulnerability when he admits his envy of Sycorax, Caliban’s mother. The “witch,” he says, is able to harness her powers from the moon’s tidal influence:

His mother was a witch, and one so strong  
That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,  
And deal in her command without her power.  
(5.1.269-271)

The relationship between the moon, who “make[s] flows and ebbs” in *The Tempest* is also reflected in *Hamlet*. Horatio, Hamlet’s schoolmate, describes the cosmological signs that portended Julius Caesar’s death in ancient Rome: the moon as “moist star” exerts her “influence” upon “Neptune’s empire” (1.1.117-118). This reading of the moon’s influence is not limited to the fancies of Shakespeare’s romances and comedies. For example, Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III* admits to “being governed by the watery moon,” the influences of which “send forth plenteous tears to drown the world” in fashion similar to Neptune’s waves (2.2.69-70). Moreover, Falstaff in *King Henry IV, Part 1*

speaks of “being governed, as the sea is, by ... the moon” (1.2.27-28), and Olivia in *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* alludes to “that time of moon” that so clearly makes humans act in “lunacy” (1.5.195n). Moreover, these examples serve to show how the celestial realm was thought to control the natural world, as well as the scientific role astronomy and astrology played in the early modern English imagination. John D. North showed years ago that celestial influence “had an important, even crucial, intellectual binding power within the cosmological systems that incorporated them” (North 100). That “binding power,” as I argue throughout this essay, clearly impacts the tidal flow of *Pericles*’s narrative events.

Diana’s lunar powers, moreover, serve to highlight the preeminence of female agency throughout the play. Diana’s lunar “influence” does not just affect nature; it also affects humans and other beings, especially with respect to male desire. Oberon tells us in *Midsummer* that the “chaste beams of the wat’ry moon,” Diana’s seat of power, “quenche[s]” the “young Cupid’s fiery shaft” (2.1.161-162). Her “mighty power” described in Baxter’s long narrative poem underscores the potency of her eminent presence in a play like *Pericles*, which was likely written within two years of *Endimions Song*. Though by no means comprehensive, these contemporary examples serve to illustrate how early moderns conceived of the goddess’s properties as moon deity. In all of these works, Diana’s powers as moon-goddess control the tides, thus leading one to ask precisely what her function is in a work so captivated by tidal ebb and flow, like *Pericles*.

Baxter’s, Fitzgeoffrey’s, Markham’s, and Shakespeare’s understandings of the tides were not just fodder for imaginative poetry or drama either. They were increasingly becoming scientific reality. By 1609, the same year that the first quarto of *Pericles* appeared in print, German astronomer Johannes Kepler had developed a theory of the moon’s effects on the earth’s tides in *Astronomia Nova* “to make more credible the ocean tide and through it the moon’s attractive powers.” Kepler understands this influence as gravity, though different from how Isaac Newton would later define it. For Kepler, gravity is “a mutual corporeal disposition among kindred bodies to unite or join together” (55). This “corporeal disposition,” however, is hidden from the human eye. It is through this occult understanding of gravity that Kepler explains the tides: “The sphere of influence of the attractive power in the moon is extended all the way to the earth ...

This is imperceptible in enclosed seas, but noticeable where the beds of the ocean are widest and there is much free space for the waters' reciprocation" (56). It would appear that Shakespeare anticipates Kepler's occult understanding of the tides, and this so-called "sphere of influence" is recalled in the theophany scene when Diana descends from the heavens. Pericles asks twice of Helicanus and Marina, "What music?" before answering himself that it must be "the music of the spheres" (5.1.212-217). Pericles goes on to comment, "Most heavenly music, / It nips me unto listening, and thick slumber / Hangs upon mine eyes" (5.1.220-222). Arden 3 editor Suzanne Gossett postulates in the notes to this scene that Shakespeare might be referring to Ptolemaic cosmology, where "music was caused by the rotation of the concentric spheres on which the heavenly bodies were arranged" (5.1.217n). But it seems to me that this "music" that Pericles hears is not just the harmonious circulations of unnamable "spheres," but one in particular: the moon's. Given that Diana descends into the scene shortly thereafter, it is difficult to deny my suspicion.

My reading here is divergent from traditional interpretations of Diana as a pagan deity in Shakespeare's works. F. Elizabeth Hart asserts persuasively that "Shakespeare and his audience would have recognized this Diana as distinct from Ovid's Diana, the chaste huntress and goddess of the moon" (Hart, "Music" 321). Perhaps, however, this assessment is a bit hasty, especially if we take into account the historical record of ideas in natural philosophy. In similar fashion, Gossett does not take into account Kepler's neo-Pythagorean cosmology, which builds substantially upon the mysticism of Ptolemy's *Harmonics*. As such, Kepler's updated model combines Copernican cosmology with spherical harmony of Ptolemaic symmetry. Moreover, Kepler's direct spiritual predecessor, Nicolaus Copernicus, writes that this "motion ... of the Spheres" renders visible the "admirable symmetry of the universe"; in turn, this music and spherical harmony legitimize the mystical reciprocity of celestial bodies, like the constant interplay between earth and moon. No one took this "clear bond of harmony" more seriously than Kepler (Copernicus 36). As intellectual historian Charles H. Kahn writes, Kepler's aims in "deciphering the riddle of the universe" means that he was able to provide "the underlying mathematical structure of the Copernican system of the Heavens" in his 1597 *Mysterium Cosmographicum* (163). In this "deciphering," Kepler unifies ancient

Pythagorean reverence for mystical, divine numbers with emerging observational astronomy and mathematical calculations. While some of Kepler's ideas in this earlier work led no farther than speculation, the undergirding philosophy that a divine force tethered the bonds of fate led him ultimately to proffer a mystical theory of the tides in 1609, thus further aligning his early modern cosmology with *Pericles's* "Celestial Dian". Kepler's mystic cosmology, then, aligns just as much with Ptolemaic spherical influence in the *Pericles* act 5 theophany scene.<sup>3</sup>

Diana's role in this "sphere of influence" provides yet another example of her celestially influenced navigational prowess. Her largely occulted influence in *Pericles* drives not only the ecodrama of the play, as Kammer suggests, but also binds her to studies in occult philosophy and women's secrets, what Mary Floyd-Wilson has described as an "occult logic" of the early modern period: mysterious natural occurrences that were "idiosyncratic, peculiar, and often at odds with the observable, elemental world" (7). This binary between the seen, masculine world and the unseen, feminine realm exposes the epistemological fissures of the era. Further, the "occult logic" of Diana's "influence" closes the yawning chasm between the seen and unseen in *Pericles* after the goddess renders herself visible in the material world. Indeed, when she announces herself in *Pericles's* dream, Diana thus makes visible the occult, or hidden, forces that have driven the tidal logic of the play. This logic, I argue, is ruled by Diana, who is responsible for the tidal action of the play that eventually leads to the tearful hard-won family reunion in act 5.

### **Of Tides and Pirates**

As the "rapture of the sea" in *Pericles* threatens to "swallow" and "ravish[]" those who dare to travel across it, the characters frequently call upon Diana to intervene (2.1.151, 4.4.39, and 4.1.98). The first invocation to the goddess in the play takes place when

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<sup>3</sup> These ideas were circulating in England even prior to the publication of Kepler's *Astronomia Nova*. Moreover, Kepler very likely followed in the footsteps of William Gilbert, a sixteenth-century English astronomer, natural philosopher, and personal physician to Queen Elizabeth. Of considerable note, Gilbert's best-known work *De Magnete* (1600) heartily rejected the Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy and argued that the earth's core acts as a large magnet, fundamentally modifying how early moderns understood their place on the watery globe. A major consequence of Gilbert's mystical fascination with magnets was the technological advancement of the navigational compass, which orients the human subject toward magnetic north. Notably, it also changed the landscape of sea navigation because it allowed for more accurate longitudinal measurements and therefore decreased the imperiled chances of getting lost at sea.

Thaisa wakes from her burial at sea. After magician-necromancer Cerimon revives the queen from her short-term death, Thaisa exclaims, “O dear Diana, where am I?” (3.2.103). This scene serves to illustrate the marked confusion between Diana’s fortuitous interventions and Neptune’s violent “rapture”. We see evidence of this misunderstanding when Cerimon and his servant posit the origin of such rich bounty. When Thaisa’s coffin makes its way to the shore, Cerimon’s servant comments that he “never saw so huge a billow, sir, / As tossed it upon shore” (3.2.53-54). They interpret the “sea’s stomach” as a source of such riches because it “belches upon” Cerimon and his men a treasure trove of gold, as well as the lifeless Thaisa. After Cerimon performs his necromancy and revives the queen, Thaisa resolves to stay chaste and find a “vestal livery” to live the rest of her life (3.4.9), yet another reference to Diana. Cerimon then advises Thaisa that “Diana’s temple is not distant far, / Where you may abide till your date expire” (3.4.12-13). In further associating Thaisa with the goddess and her proximity to Ephesus after washing ashore, evidence of Diana’s occulted influence grows all the stronger.

Literary critics Caroline Bicks and Hart have already shown how focusing on Diana transforms *Pericles* from a male-centric dramatic narrative into one that makes considerable space for women and gender. On the one hand, Bicks argues in her essay that by the time Diana mythology reached the early modern era, the goddess was a host of contradictions: “As the Greek Artemis and the Roman Diana, she protected virginity; as Hecate she embodied the mysteries of female power; her association with the procreative Amazons and the ancient fertility goddess led to her formulation as Luna, goddess of the moon, and Lucina, the Roman goddess of childbirth” (207). Amid this enmeshment of ancient mythological and religious traditions, Bicks argues, was an early modern tradition that preempted a heated religious debate between the maternal bodily mysteries of pagan ritual, and the ever-increasing divide between Protestant and Catholic religious practices. These incendiary conversations thus converged around the issue of “churching” women, or purifying the maternal body through religious ritual after childbirth. Similar to the Ephesian Diana, the “churching community” in early modern England would affirm both the “miraculous *and* material” processes of childbirth and recovery—both of which Diana in *Pericles* uncoincidentally represents (208).

On the other hand, Hart explores Diana's genealogy further when she claims that the Roman mythology became syncretized with near-East fertility goddesses in the late antique world. Diana's authority as "providential God-as-Mother" in *Pericles* "owes as much of her persona to Asian fertility rites as she does to Greco-Roman concepts of female chastity" (Hart "Diana" 348). These fertility goddesses were then enveloped into Roman mythology, and then again with Mary, Mother of God, who is similarly and contradictorily virginal yet fecund. These discrepancies between pagan and Christian religions become further confused when Ephesus as a site of "model Christian community" is added to the fray (Bicks 210). Early moderns would have recognized the potency of Diana's invocation from the New Testament book of Acts describing the tense standoff between the Apostle Paul and the votaries in the Ephesian temple to an Artemis-Diana proxy: "Our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:27-28). Bicks's research shows early modern Christianity's contentious relationship with Ephesian comparison. On the one hand, midwives associated the Ephesian goddess with the blessings of safe childbirth. On the other hand, Ephesus was an ancient city intensely associated with pagan and Catholic excesses of idolatry for English Protestants. In Protestant minister Sampson Price's words, "*Ephesus* is fallen ... Here *John* and the *Virgin* lived" (19). This confluence of pagan, Catholic, and the apostolic origins became a city synonymous with, in Bicks's words, "the Protestant Church of England and its post-Reformation conflicts ... [resting] on shaky foundations" (207). If the city of Ephesus was a reminder to English Protestants of backsliding into Catholic or, worse, pagan idolatry, Diana held an even more contentious position because of her associations with Roman pagan ritual.

I do not challenge traditional interpretations of Diana as protectress of vestal virginity and chastity; rather, I suggest an extra layer of complexity to the goddess figure in *Pericles*. More to the point, it would appear that she is able to *embody* the women who call upon her for assistance. This intricacy is further enhanced when we also read closely Marina's dialogue with various lecherous men. Born amid a raging tempest,



Marina, daughter to Thaisa and Pericles, is unsurprisingly associated with water “for she was born at sea” (3.3.13). Her name in Latin literally means “belonging to the sea,” and yet, as she persistently reminds the licentious men around her, even if she was born into and amid the sea’s violence, she is not of it. Marina’s language thus appears to anticipate current ecofeminist conversations about gender, environment, and embodiment. Moreover, the rhetoric of ecofeminist embodiment offers us a helpful vocabulary for reading Marina’s feminine virtue. N. Katherine Hayles writes that ecofeminist embodiment “enables us to see that embodied experience comes not only from the complex interplay between brain and viscera [but] also from the constant engagement of our embodied interactions with the environment” (298). In *Pericles*, the most conspicuous “embodied experience ... with the environment” is not always a positive one: Marina, for example, is constantly pushed and pulled by the sea’s vicissitudes. First, her birth during a storm solidifies her identification with the sea. Second, Pericles shirks his parental duty and quite literally ships her to Dionyzia and Cleon’s malignant grasp. Third, Marina is captured by pirates and sold into sexual slavery at a Mytilene brothel. And fourth, she must once again face the sea’s violence when she escapes to Ephesus. Yet despite these notable similarities with the sea’s lechery, Marina is still able, somehow, to maintain her maidenhood in the face of repeated and increasingly more alarming threats of sexual violence.

I thus contend that what we see in Marina is another kind of embodiment, that of Diana’s fortitude and commitment to virginity. Hayles’s understanding of ecofeminist embodiment reveals the “visible results of the dynamic ongoingness of flux” in the natural world. At first blush, Hayles’s rubric suggests that this tidal flow, this “dynamic ongoingness of flux,” is redolent of Neptune’s dominion (298). However, if we keep in mind not only Diana’s occulted power as the goddess of the moon, but also early modern conceptions of Floyd-Wilson’s female-centric “occult logic,” we can begin to uncover the subtle workings where Marina embodies Diana. We see an example of this phenomenon when Marina is sold into prostitution. She tells Bawd:

If fires be hot, knives sharp or waters deep,  
Untried I still my virgin knot will keep.  
Diana, aid my purpose!  
(4.2.138-140)

As we see here in her powerful proclamation, Marina compares the reputability of her “virgin knot” to the “waters deep.” To “aid” this intention, Marina thus calls upon Diana to protect her. If Marina’s determination to hold onto her virginity is inextricable from the “waters deep” of the sea, then her prayer to Diana makes sense, not only because the goddess protects virginity, but also because she can intervene on the “rapture of the sea.” Pericles says as much in the second act of the play when he talks to the sea itself:

[R]emember earthly man  
Is but a substance that must yield to you,  
And I, as fits my nature, obey you.  
(2.1.2-4)

This lament shows Pericles’s full display of powerlessness, as well as the need to submit himself to his fickle prisoner. When Pericles wails that “earthly man” is subject to immense vulnerability—that is, the state of woundedness—it is important to remember that the women in the play are far more susceptible to the sea’s ills. Embedded within this language of “rapture” or a violent, forceful seizure, of course, is the latent suggestion of rape and sexual violence. The very root of the English words “rape” and its close etymological variant “rapture” are both derived from the Latin verb *rapere*: to steal, to plunder, to violate sexually. Thaisa’s and Marina’s status as women without nearby male protectors, whether they be father or husband, threatens to undermine their agency. However, Diana’s protecting powers of “Soueraigntie” over Neptune undermine this potential fate. Diana’s example of vestal virginity is a model that Marina copies to shame the brothel’s clientele; in Thaisa’s case, the goddess’s Ephesian temple serves as a respite from sexual advance, and the “unwoeful queen” tucks herself away in Diana’s temple as a “votaress” to guarantee that her female chastity and marital bond to Pericles remain intact (4.0.3-4).

If Diana can embody women to stave off sexual violence as I suggest, then it also follows that Neptune can similarly enmesh himself with the human form. For example, *Cymbeline* illustrates that this benthic embodiment goes to the very core of British identity. As the Queen tells Cloten and Cymbeline, Britain’s very identity is founded within the island nation’s place as “Neptune’s park, rubbed and paled in / With rocks unscalable and roaring waters” (3.1.22-23). This confluence of “rocks unscalable” and “roaring waters” serves to naturalize the geographical-humoral behavior of the British

people. For the queen in *Cymbeline*, the craggy landscape among “Neptune’s park” dovetails with the stalwartness of the English people, “the natural bravery of your isle” (3.1.21). We also see evidence of this tidal embodiment in the various references to and threats of sexual violence throughout *Pericles*. Implicit to the play’s dramatic action is the suggestion that the sea as rapacious entity eventually infuses the sexual desire of the men whose lives and livelihoods rely upon maritime economies, and this relationship between sea and desire becomes a narrative pattern in *Pericles*. We see an example of this interrelation when the governor Lysimachus encounters Marina in the brothel; he tells Bawd, “She would serve after a long voyage at sea” (4.5.49-50). A practical reading renders this exchange fairly cut and dried: Lysimachus seeks Marina’s services because he has been bereft of female companionship while at sea. However, on closer examination, this transaction reveals this account as, in Brayton’s words, a “tidal *raptus* ... a tidal economy of emotion” overtaking the male subject (98). While Brayton deploys this term to explain Tarquin’s desires for Lucrece in *The Rape of Lucrece*, his analysis is useful for our purposes here. This “tidal economy” thus transforms the rapist into the role of the privateer, or pirate, who seeks to extrajudicially capture his target’s “treasure,” the chaste maiden’s virginity. Brayton’s analysis focuses on certain “hydraulic forces by likening characters to the sea and their emotional transport to the effects of rising and falling tides” in *Lucrece*, but my reading shows that this tidal economy goes even further as Shakespeare progresses in his playwrighting career (98). Additionally, the tides are no longer just mere metaphor. Rather, I argue that the masculine tides appear, as Hayles might argue, to influence the actions of men brought about by the “constant engagement of our embodied interactions with the environment” (298). This benthic embodiment furthers my assertion of a blue gender studies; in rendering visible the allegorization of gender with Roman mythological frameworks, it also makes real the ecocritical theory that nature does not just interact with man; it interacts *upon* him.

In *Pericles*, Marina as “a creature of sale,” responds to Lysimachus’s blank verse in iambs: “O, that the gods / Would set me free from this unhallowed place” (4.5.83, 103-4). The “unhallowed” brothel from which Marina begs the gods to free her somehow converts Lysimachus’s desire from carnal to subdued, and her iambs manage to convince Lysimachus to stave off his own “tidal *raptus*”: “I did not think / Thou couldst

have spoke so well, ne'er dreamt thou couldst" (4.5.106-7). Marina's "speech" thus "alter[s]" Lysimachus's "corrupted mind" (4.5.108-9). The economic exchange shifts from one of surging "tidal" emotions that overcome Tarquin to one of moral rectitude in Lysimachus: "Hold, here's gold for thee. / Persever in that clear way thou goest" (4.5.109-110). Lysimachus's "tidal *raptus*" surrenders to Marina's "clear way"—highlighting not only the sacred path down which Marina walks, but also the fact that there is a path on which to traverse at all. As the tide of desire recedes, a solid, "clear way" is instead revealed for Marina to "goest." That clear path leads Lysimachus to call Marina a "piece of virtue," and he gives her "more gold" as he looks to leave the brothel (4.5.116, 118). Ashamed, Lysimachus curses the man that "robs thee [Marina] of thy goodness" (4.5.120) and hastily makes his exit. But the tidal language does not end there. When Bolt asks for "one piece [of gold] for me" as Lysimachus leaves, the governor incredulously exclaims:

Avaunt, thou damned doorkeeper!  
Your house, but for this virgin that doth prop it,  
Would sink and overwhelm you.  
(4.5.122, 123-125)

In this instance, Marina seems to become a proxy for, and potential embodiment of, Diana; the "gods" that "strengthen" her also keep the brothel in coastal Mytilene from "sink[ing]" into and being "overwhelm[ed]" by the sea. The same deity that keeps Marina's "virgin knot" intact—"Diana, aid my purpose!"—might in fact also keep the rapacious sea from swallowing the house into "the waters deep". I suggest that it is thus perhaps Marina's intense devotion to Diana that keeps her on the "clear way," unharmed by the "unhallowed" environment—that is, both the seedy brothel and the debauched sea—by which she is surrounded.

Imagery of the rapist as pirate further underscores this same economical exchange of a "tidal *raptus*" when Marina is captured by actual pirates in *Pericles*. For Brayton, this phenomenon in *Lucrece* amounts to "a series of carefully constructed and interlinked metaphors connecting bodies and emotions to oceanic forces—tides, storms, piracy, and shipwreck" (98). Notably, all four of these phenomena characterize, and potentially define, the narrative action of *Pericles*. Similar to Tarquin's "prize" Lucrece, the swashbuckling pirates in *Pericles* see Marina and immediately begin shouting, "A prize!

A prize!" (4.1.89). When the privateers capture Marina, the murderer Leonine posits that they will "please themselves upon her" before killing her (4.1.96). In the next line, Leonine convinces himself that the pirates' sexual violence against Marina is inevitable: "If she remain, / Whom they have ravished, must by me be slain" (4.1.97-8). Similar to its close synonym rapture, ravishment signifies the simultaneous connotation of both capture and brutal sexual violence (see OED, "ravish"). Privateering, of course, was a major prop for the English imperialist aspirations. Most notable were Queen Elizabeth I's pirates, or Sea Dogs, who protected the coasts of England: Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins, and Sir Walter Raleigh. According to Fuchs, early modern pirates reveal the "cultural anxieties" of the era, which were "attendant upon the representation of a merchant nation and the development of an English empire based on commerce" ("Pirates" 47). The queen's Sea Dogs, for example, were responsible for establishing colonies in the New World, as well as looting enemy ships and returning the treasures to enrich English royal coffers. Privateering functioned as the beginning of the global economy, with each European nation jockeying to embargo resources like sugar, cotton, spices, and enslaved peoples (Rodger 190-203). That the pirates view Marina as "a prize" therefore reinforces the play's tidal economy. Not only is her maidenhood worth capitalizing, but it also represents the incredible vulnerability Marina faces at the hands of both the rapacious pirates and an equally lecherous, unforgiving natural environment.

The insinuation that the pirates will rape Marina when they capture her further binds this association to the sea's rapacious qualities. And yet, in what I argue is perhaps by the grace of Diana, Marina remains unviolated. When Bolt, servant to the proprietors of the Mytilene brothel asks, "You say she's a virgin?" (4.2.36-7), the pirate mysteriously replies, "O sir, we doubt it not" (4.2.39). While the pirate offers little clarification, Gossett offers two potential rationales: through either first, the possibility that Marina resembles the Senecan "valiant virgin," or second, the likelihood that Marina, "like one of the saints she resembles," is able to convince the pirates to leave her untouched and unharmed (4.2.39n). Whatever the case, if it is true that an analogic relationship exists between sea and desire, as I suggest, it makes logical sense that Marina invokes Diana in order to protect her virginity.

In addition to ameliorating threats of sexual violence, I suggest that Diana serves as the antidote to the “tidal violence” of Shakespeare’s play. If Diana’s powers are associated with the moon, and if the moon “doost controule” Earth, then it stands to reason that the lucky vicissitudes conventionally attributed to the work of Fortuna—a commonplace convention in the romance genre—might in fact be the intervening actions of Diana and her “sphere of influence”. A careful examination of the play’s events reveals that once the goddess’s name is invoked, the tempests that throw the characters across the Mediterranean come to a halt. Pericles often attributes his fortunate and unfortunate journeys alike to the sea’s unpredictability, but that meaning shifts when we begin to consider the moon’s tidal influence. Perhaps, then, when Pericles suggests that “Alas, the seas hath cast me on the rocks,” it is the restorative work of Diana that helps the prince “wash[] ... from shore to shore” (2.1.5-7).

Indeed, while the violence of the tempests threatens to drown Pericles and his crew, the tides are what ultimately result in the reversal of their fortune. The tides are what allow Pericles’s “rusty armour” to wash up on shore, as well as Thaisa’s “fresh” corpse (2.1.115 and 3.2.78). These tidal fluctuations are ultimately what lead Pericles to his chance meeting with Thaisa, when he gallantly announces to her,

My education’s been in arts and arms,  
Who looking for adventures in the world  
Was by rough seas reft of ship and men,  
And after shipwreck driven upon this shore.  
(2.3.79-82)

Pericles’s language in the passage foregrounds the “rough seas,” and the tides are what have “driven” Pericles “upon this shore”. Cerimon’s servant comments similarly when Thaisa washes ashore: “If the sea’s stomach be o’ercharged with gold, / ’Tis a good constraint of fortune / It belches upon us” (3.2.56-58). But as Baxter’s poem illustrated for us earlier, Diana’s powers are what allow the tides to push and “belch[]” up the “gold,” Thaisa and her bountiful coffin. Lest we forget, Diana is capable of benthic roaming: she trawls “the Cauerns of the deepe” and “views the bottom of the Ocean, / Where never walked mortall living man.” The sea controls Pericles, but Diana controls the sea.

### Coda

Rather than viewing the sea-tossed characters in *Pericles* as hapless victims of Fortuna's contingency, I suggest an added layer of complexity to the romance genre. Though romance functions as an engine for operating through the hidden workings of universal forces, Diana as moon deity intervenes with her tidal influence, and she acts as a mediating factor in this wandering quest, silently and invisibly pressing pause on the endless suffering that the sea's tempests effect. But why is it important to elevate Diana, a deity of the cosmos, into blue cultural studies? To be sure, the goddess functions as a "dynamic agent" in the course of the sea's vicissitudes and provides a prevailing logic over a watery world otherwise bereft of meaningful pattern. If anything, Diana's magnetic influence over the tides further points to the interconnectivity so prominent in literary understandings of ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and blue Shakespeare. What this argument resists, however, is the flattening of all ecology into an asexual layer of "unitive dimensions". Diana and her feminine virtue function to restore the family bonds that the sea violently rends. This analysis, then, ultimately suggests a place at the table for ameliorative virtue within a holistic ecological system that prevails over the notion of "interconnectedness".

My fundamental claim here is to suggest that the dualism in Shakespeare's *Pericles* is not necessarily a pitfall to be gingerly avoided. As the rhetoric revolving around the sea in *Pericles* reminds us, the sea is not an amorphous, asexual entity in the early modern world. Rather, it "swallow[s]" and "ravish[es]." These metaphors of the water's powers are not without powerful implications; furthermore, the unifying tendency of ecological criticism has so far elided this coded language of benthic rape and capture. In other words, I suggest, albeit cautiously, that perhaps this dualism serves a purpose in the higher logic of "ecological cognition," especially when we remember that Diana's actions literally decenter and upend Pericles's "heroic individualism" at the same time that she harbors vulnerable subjects from the scarring vicissitudes of oceanic contingency.

Lastly, I end this article by reiterating the need for a blue gender studies. While "blue cultural studies" provides an "offshore" realm of study that investigates the sea as a site of maritime imagination and scientific advancement, as both Mentz and Brayton have

persuasively argued, a blue gender studies supplies us with a conceptual framework that emphasizes the gendered seafaring journeys crisscrossing Shakespeare's corpus. In doing so, this schema refuses to flatten the gendered language endemic to functioning ecologies that are so prevalent in early modern works. A blue gender studies, then, refuses to normalize the "rapturous" characterization of the sea and instead refocuses our attention on the ideological, cosmological balm of Diana's prowess to "voyde corruption" and restrain masculinist violence in the process.

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