

EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



Giddy Lies the Head that Wears the Crown: Apoplexy and Political Spectacle in 2 *Henry IV*

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In one of 2 *Henry VI*'s more notorious moments, Margaret of Anjou places a paper crown on the head of Richard, Duke of York, bidding him to 'Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance. / Thou wouldst be fee'd, I see, to make me sport: / York cannot speak unless he wear a crown' (1.4.90-2).¹ In this scene, Margaret forces York into the position of an early modern actor or itinerant beggar, paid to publicly imitate madness for an audience. Early modern surgeon Ambroise Paré includes a polemic against such criminal tactics in his tract, *On Monsters and Marvels*:

Such as feigne themselves dumbe, draw backe and double their tongues in their mouths. Such as falling downe counterfeit the falling sicknesse... and shake their limbes and whole body. Lastly by putting sope into their mouths, they foame at the mouth like those that have the falling sicknesse.²

The 'falling sickness' in Paré's text describes the conditions of both epilepsy and apoplexy. Paré's observations reveal the falling sickness as a metatheatrical and political symbol in early modern culture. During Margaret's confrontation with York, the actor, who solicits applause, performs a ruler, who performs a criminal beggar's artificial performance of giddy madness, all while wearing a paper crown as a literal and symbolic 'prop'. In Margaret's mockery, and, arguably, across the history cycle, the dominant thematic concern rests not merely in the representational nature of power, or stagecraft as statecraft, but in the fissures within, and fragility of, that representation. Like a performance, political power in the history cycle is a paper-thin construction,

¹ All references to Shakespeare's plays are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997) and will be cited parenthetically.

² Ambroise Paré, *The Workes of that Famous Chirurgeon Ambrose Parey...* Second edition (London: Cotes and Young, 1634), 995.

circumscribed by the consent of its viewing audience. If the early modern monarch and her public are locked into a mutual performance, then this performance is continually threatened by collapse. In *2 Henry IV*, the king physically collapses into a comatose state that Falstaff diagnoses as an apoplexy. King Henry IV's apoplexy, as a liminal state of mental and physical paralysis, exposes the potential fragility of political performance. Early modern medical writers Philip Barrough and Helkiah Crooke define apoplexy as a loss or cessation of sense and motion, originating in the brain.³ Henry IV's own description of his illness shows a progression of the disease from 'giddy' or dizzy head to disordered body as he laments that 'now' his sense of 'sight fails, and my brain is giddy' (4.4.110). 'Giddiness' functioned as a paradoxical term in these medical discourses. Giddiness could imply both a frenzied, dizzy motion of body and mind, *and* a heavy, stymied paralysis. Embedded in this term, then, is a dual anxiety that the monarch's necessarily theatrical motion will either devolve into frantic 'stamping, raving, and fretting', or cease altogether in its discursive function.

Manic mobility portrays kingship as frantic spectacle at the same time that apoplexy's paralysis threatens the monarchy's political/theatrical failure – as an 'idol/idle ceremony' (*Henry V* 4.1.240). Henry V's 'idol/idle' homonym famously represents political performance as a manifestly performative, yet empty ostentation. In a now-obsolete sense, Henry's term of 'idle' – often used in combinations such as 'idle-headed', 'idle-brained', and 'idle-pated' – would have referred to a giddiness, loss of sense, deliriousness, and mental incapacitation similar to definitions of apoplexy.⁴ In Shakespeare's *Henriad*, then, power's debilitation is perhaps inherent within its representation. In apoplectic conditions, the very elements that normally help to prop, array, and construct one another in early modern culture – political power and performance – are instead mutually destabilized. Kings become performing counterfeits and mountebanks, and the physical aspects of performance, which often secured power,

³ Philip Barrough, *The Methode of Physicke Conteyning the Causes, Signes, and Cures of Inward Diseases in Man's Body...* Second Edition (London: Thomas Vautrouiller, 1583). Barrough states that 'all the senewes' are 'affected' and 'every part of the body doth sodainly loose both moving and sense' to the 'hurt of all voluntary functions' in apoplexy. These 'senewes' are tendons or fibrous tissue connecting a muscle to a bone, or may further be 'nerves' in the obsolete sense of connective matter present in the body as well as the brain (C1r). Helkiah Crooke also situates the brain as the organ that this malady originates in: 'dayly practise and experience teacheth us that when the ventricles of the Braine, are either compressed, or filled and stuffed up', or 'swell too full of bloud', 'as in the Apoplexy, Epilepsie, and drowsie *Caros*, then all the faculties are respited and cease from their functions'. See Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of Man...* (London: William Jaggard, 1615) 40-1.

⁴ See *OED*, 'idle', sense 2b: "Void of meaning or sense; foolish, silly, incoherent; also (of persons) light-headed, out of one's mind, delirious (cf. idle-headed adj.). *Obs.*," 'idle-headed', sense 2: 'Off one's head, out of one's wits; distracted, delirious', and special uses of 'idle': 'S1. Parasynthetic combs., as idle-bellied, idle-brained, idle-handed, idle-minded (so idle-mindedness), idle-pated, idle-thoughted, idle-witted adjs. Also idle-looking adj.; idle-headed adj.'

weaken. In *2 Henry IV*, apoplexy anatomizes the internal contradictions of state theatrics and the theatricalized state.

My analysis of apoplexy draws inspiration from recent research on the early modern body. Though scholars such as Valerie Traub and Mary Floyd-Wilson have broadly discussed the relationship between the *Henriad* cycle and early modern humoral theory, apoplexy's specific, symbolic dislocation of the early modern English body politic remains unexplored. I argue that in the representation of Henry IV's apoplexy, the politico-theatrical power structures of king/subject and head/body are not merely subverted, but inverted and interrogated. I will first investigate Henry IV's apoplexy in the context of its diagnosis and cure. Falstaff's diagnosis inverts early modern social structures of head/limb and king/subject. Further, his role as both physician and disease demonstrates the gendered relationship between brain and womb as mutually dependent, but potentially monstrous parts of the political body. The cures outlined in the play – war, sack, and sleep – reveal apoplexy's response to the highly gendered anxieties of the Elizabethan state. Then, I will explore apoplexy's effect on bodily motion and mental reason through its implications for political metatheatrics. Finally, I will apply medical and metatheatrical concepts of apoplexy to the transformed relationship between public/audience and actor/king.

I. Diagnosis and Diagnostician

Apoplexy and epilepsy share many characteristics in popular early modern medical texts, such as Phillip Barrough's popular *Method of Physicke* (1583) and Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* (1615).⁵ Just as Barrough and Crooke use the terms epilepsy and apoplexy interchangeably, as 'falling sicknesses', Shakespeare's other falling and epileptic characters, such as Caesar, Othello, and King Lear, experience collapses that mirror Henry IV's apoplectic fit.⁶ For instance, King Lear's madness and fainting similarly exhibit the fall of his sovereignty and state. Othello's trembling, shaking, and falling (4.1.39-43), which Iago characterizes as an 'epilepsy' and 'savage madness' (4.1.50; 4.1.55), emphasizes his affective and physical instability as a result of

⁵ I do not argue here for a direct textual influence on *2 Henry IV*, but instead posit that Barrough, Crooke, and Shakespeare share a similar cultural understanding of apoplexy, which in turn responded to shared political and physical anxieties in early modern England. However, Joan Lane draws several connections between Shakespeare's texts and his familial relationship to his son-in-law, the physician John Hall. See *John Hall and His Patients* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 1996).

⁶ While Caesar is the most obviously epileptic figure in Shakespeare, arguments have been made for King Lear's epilepsy (see Kent 2.2.77 'A plague upon your epileptic visage!') and Othello's: see Stephanie Moss, 'Reading Epilepsy in *Othello*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of South Florida, 1997).

Iago's poisonous 'medicine' (5.1.44).⁷ More broadly, recent examinations of disability in Shakespeare – particularly in representations of kingship and nobility – by Abigail Elizabeth Comber, Caroline Lamb, and Katherine Schaap Williams have conceptualized disability as a social-historical construct and political metaphor, a portrayal of the mutual 'adaptability of the political and physical body', a productive means of performativity, and a lens for revealing bodily instability at large.⁸ Comber argues that, since disability was associated with poor and peasant bodies in late medieval and early modern culture, a disabled kingly or noble body often represented social distortion.⁹ Further, Allison P. Hobgood identifies the culturally uncertain nature of the falling sickness as an invisible disability in her reading of *Julius Caesar*. She argues that the play enacts an 'ableist politics' through its characterization of Brutus as a purgative agent, as well as Caesar's own self-description as a 'fixed', stable body. Hobgood describes the early modern cure of 'cramp rings' for epileptics as a way to render this invisible condition visible, less 'dangerously illegible'.¹⁰ Henry IV's apoplexy, as rendered both physically visible to his political and theatrical audience and diffused across the political body of his kingdom, instead displays and performs its own uncertainty. Apoplexy in *2 Henry IV* destabilizes boundaries between the king's physical and metaphysical bodies, masculinity and femininity, actor and audience, the head of state and the political bodies of its members. Many of these studies of disability and falling sicknesses in Shakespeare draw from, and sometimes counter, David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's influential analysis of disability in literary history as a 'narrative prosthesis', a 'crutch' of metaphor and characterization 'upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight'.¹¹ But the representation of apoplexy in *2 Henry IV* is as much of a performative scalpel as a narrative prosthesis: far from strictly exhibiting existing cultural metaphors of disease, performance, and power, it unhinges and interrogates them.

⁷ Stephanie Moss cites Othello's epilepsy as a representation of his split from insider to (black) outsider, subject to object, and from a Paracelsian spiritual body to a Galenic material body (p. 153); she also labels Iago as a 'Paracelsian infectant' within the play (p. 157). Thomas M. Vozar argues that Othello's seizure displays a breakdown in the early modern mind-body distinction. See 'Body-Mind Aporia in the Seizure of Othello', *Philosophy and Literature* 36.1 (2012) 183-6.

⁸ See Abigail Elizabeth Comber, 'A Medieval King "Disabled" by an Early Modern Construct: A Contextual Examination of *Richard III*' in *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations*, ed. by Joshua R. Eyler (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010) pp. 183-96 (pp. 184-6); Caroline Lamb, 'Physical Trauma and (Adapt)ability in *Titus Andronicus*', *Critical Survey* 22.1 (2010) 41-57 (p. 41); and Katherine Schaap Williams, 'Enabling Richard: The Rhetoric of Disability in *Richard III*', *Disability Studies Quarterly* 29.4 (2009; no pagination).

⁹ Comber, p. 187.

¹⁰ Allison P. Hobgood, 'Caesar Hath the Falling Sickness: The Legibility of Early Modern Disability in Shakespearean Drama', *Disability Studies Quarterly* 29.4 (2009; no pagination).

¹¹ David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 49.

Henry IV's apoplexy both parallels and reverses other representations of falling kings in Shakespeare. In her analysis of King Lear's fainting, for example, Patricia Cahill explores the early modern cultural association of vertigo with both haptic and psychic trauma, an understanding derived from Galen and Lucretius.¹² During King Lear's death at the play's end, Edgar exclaims, 'he faints' (5.3.313). Edgar mistakes Lear's death for this more temporary condition. Conversely, Henry IV's apoplexy, or 'falling sickness', is mistaken for death in *2 Henry IV's* famous crown theft scene (4.5). King Lear's death-as-fainting seems to represent a body finally collapsing in on itself, one last frailty to accumulate on his lunacy and blindness. This scene supports Cahill's focus on Lear's personal trauma, and emphasizes the finality of his last moments. The way that apoplexy mimics death in *2 Henry IV* instead allows Henry IV's disease a symbolic continuity as a shared political as well as personal trauma. As Hal famously steals his father's crown during this false death, apoplexy demonstrates anxieties of dynastic continuity, rather than finality. While *2 Henry IV's* representation of apoplexy has a strong sense of continuity with Shakespeare's other 'falling' or disabled characters, the specific features of this disease and its portrayal also indicate the uniquely disruptive nature of Henry IV's apoplexy to the body politic.

Both epilepsy and apoplexy derive from the brain in the medical literature of Shakespeare's era; however, their few distinctions are important to a closer analysis of *2 Henry IV*.¹³ Epilepsy affects mental consciousness in Barrough's use and in other popular medical texts, such as Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.¹⁴ Barrough depicts epilepsy as an intermittently recurring disease of the brain.¹⁵ Apoplexy, by contrast, harms sensory 'motion' in addition to mental 'sense', though it also still originates in the head/brain. Barrough defines epilepsy as a temporary, intermittent paralysis, coming and going by 'chance'.¹⁶ In apoplexy, the seizure is sudden, with no guarantee that the sufferer's faculties will ever be regained. Indeed, while these sources depict epilepsy as uncontrolled, overemphatic motion – like that of Margaret's description of York, or Paré's description of counterfeit criminals – apoplexy describes motion's permanent diminishment or full loss, leading to lethargy, passivity, and a simulation of death. Both frenzied movement, a symptom of all falling sicknesses, and full, permanent paralysis, a unique feature of apoplexy, become political pathologies in *2 Henry IV*. Apoplexy strikes either those suffering from extreme emotional distress or

¹² Patricia Cahill, 'Falling Into Extremity' in *Knowing Shakespeare: Senses, Embodiment, and Cognition*, ed. by Lowell Gallagher and Shankar Raman (New York: Palgrave, 2010), pp. 82-101 (pp. 84-5).

¹³ In his chapters 'On the Lethargy' and 'Of Dead Sleep', Barrough characterizes gives apoplexy and epilepsy similar symptoms ('vapours' of the brain) and cures (purges and laxatives) (sig. B4).

¹⁴ Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (New York: New York Review Books, 2001).

¹⁵ Barrough, sig. C4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

those who are of advanced age, which certainly characterizes Henry IV's weariness at the end of the history cycle.¹⁷ The courtiers Warwick and Gloucester debate which diagnosis – epilepsy or the more serious apoplexy – threatens the king's health. The more optimistic Warwick, who previously argued of Henry IV's condition, 'It is but as a body yet distempered, / Which to his former strength may be restored / With good advice and little medicine' (3.1.41-3), prefers to believe that Henry IV has intermittent epilepsy: 'you do know these fits / Are with his Highness very ordinary' (4.4.115). However, Clarence and Gloucester's diagnosis of apoplexy reveals the more serious nature of his disease: 'this apoplexy will certain be his end' (4.4.130). By the play's end, apoplexy does indeed end Henry IV's life. Shakespeare's decision to inflict the specific condition of apoplexy on Henry IV thus effectively raises the stakes for his succession and dramatizes the dynastic anxieties of the Elizabethan historical moment.

Apoplexy's origination in the head or brain and symptomatic spread through the body's disparate parts borrows from Galenic theories of bodily organs' interdependency. This early modern anatomization of hierarchical, mutually dependent brain and body parts parallels the ideal construction of the early modern state. Shakespeare employs the disordered body of the apoplectic Henry IV as a metaphor for disorder in the larger body politic. In his classic text, *The King's Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz explores kingship in medieval Europe as a cultural allegory. The king's body was split in two: a mortal, physical body and a spiritual, national, and immortal body. In Kantorowicz's representations of medieval kingship, the body politic included both the nation-state and the individual, physical body of the king that publicly represented it.¹⁸ The cult of Elizabeth, flourishing during *2 Henry IV's* late sixteenth-century creation, drew from and resurrected this motif in early modern political discourse. As she famously

¹⁷ Ibid, sig. C1.

¹⁸ Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997). The Kantorowiczian 'two bodies' model is by no means the sole and critically unchallenged paradigm for early modern sovereignty and the state. David Norbrook, for example, criticizes scholarly acceptance of Kantorowicz's theory as unwittingly allied to a reactionary and poetic rather than historically substantiated representation of kingship; see 'The Emperor's New Body? *Richard II*, Ernst Kantorowicz, and the Politics of Shakespeare Criticism', *Textual Practice* 10.2 (1996), 329-57 (pp. 330 and 333). Norbrook instead argues for a divide between the public state and the private sovereign, drawn from classical republican models. Richard Halpern departs from Norbrook's reading, claiming that Kantorowicz does make allowances for the king's dependence on law: he points out that Kantorowicz's work is not exactly 'self-identical or consistent'; see 'The King's Two Buckets: Kantorowicz, *Richard II*, and Fiscal *Trauerspiel*', *Representations* 106.1 (2009), 67-76 (p. 74). In 'Imagining Justice: Kantorowicz and Shakespeare', Lorna Hutson makes the case for a representation of the state based on a shared commonwealth, or even plots or 'plats' of land, in sixteenth and seventeenth century dramatic literature. See 'Imagining Justice: Kantorowicz and Shakespeare', *Representations* 106.1 (2009), 118-42 (p. 119). Questions of justice are then ultimately posed to a theatrical audience. While I adopt the two bodies model in my analysis of *2 Henry IV* – a play that, with its references to dynastic succession that supersedes Henry IV's bodily debility, seems to uphold Kantorowicz's reading of *Richard II* – I ultimately cast the sovereign's dual performance of spiritual and physical power as dependent, as in Hutson's argument, on its reception by a political/theatrical audience.

proclaims in the Tilbury speech, ‘I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too’.¹⁹ This discourse of the ‘queen’s two bodies’, as Marie Axton terms it, attempted a resolution of the binaries of male/female, head/body, monarch/subjects.²⁰ The problem of dynastic succession under a virgin queen both underpinned and undermined discourses of physical mortality and political immortality. For example, Elizabeth’s self-association with the ‘phoenix’ symbol evoked undying self-sufficiency, yet invited questions of who would rise from the ashes of the Tudor line.²¹ Shakespeare’s representation of apoplexy draws from similar anxieties and resolutions. Henry IV’s comatose state, like the phoenix image, blurs the boundary between physical and dynastic life and death. Henry V’s theft of Henry IV’s crown both responds to Elizabeth’s long-deferred decision to name an heir and points towards a hope of monarchical continuity. Shakespeare’s *2 Henry IV* re-imagines and inverts Elizabeth’s iconic self-representation of immortality and rejuvenation.

2 Henry IV’s allusions to Galenic theory also, however, highlight the crises of disunity latent in the imperial Tudor monarchy. In medieval and Galenic concepts of political bodies, the king’s body acts as a microcosm of the great chain of being. Concepts of the body politic construed the state’s monarch as its head and its subjects as its members or joints.²² Any affliction, whether of corporal frame or of morale, striking either the king or the populace, will ultimately affect the other – though the greatest responsibility for the health of the state rests upon the body politic’s ‘head’ or king. If the king’s two bodies form a representation of both dynastic and physical power, then Shakespeare’s depiction of apoplexy portrays the frailty of that representation. At *2 Henry IV*’s outset, several limbs – regional and social, depicted by the rebels and Falstaff’s coterie – behave as spasmodic, independent limbs, cut off from the head of state’s authority.

¹⁹ *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 326.

²⁰ See Marie Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977).

²¹ Louis Montrose ties the visual symbolism of the late sixteenth-century cult of Elizabeth, including Elizabeth’s chosen symbols of phoenix and pelican, to early modern political discordances at length. See ‘Elizabeth Through the Looking Glass: Picturing the Queen’s Two Bodies’ in *The Body of the Queen: Gender and Rule in the Courtly World, 1500-2000*, ed. by Regina Schulte with the assistance of Pernille Arenfeldt, Martin Kohlrausch, and Xenia von Tippelskirch (Oxford: Berhahn Books, 2006), pp. 61-87 (p. 69).

²² Martha Kalnin Diede argues that, in Shakespeare’s *Henriad*, the failures of Richard II and Henry IV as monarchs are inherently failures to control their constituent ‘members’. See *Shakespeare’s Knowledgeable Body* (New York: Lang, 2008), p. 2. Marjorie Garber discusses the metaphor of the people as ‘joints’ of the state (elbows, knees, genitals) in Shakespeare’s plays, revealing their ability both to genuflect power and to unhinge it. See ‘Out of Joint’ in *The Body in Parts*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997) pp. 23-52.

Falstaff becomes the first to define and diagnose Henry IV's apoplexy, which in itself reveals the body politic's pathology. This diagnosis deflects the Justice's accusation of robbery in Act 1. The Justice charges, 'I talk not of his majesty. You would not come when I sent for you' (1.2.105-6); Falstaff dissembles with the non-sequitur, 'And I hear, moreover, his Highness is fall'n into this same whoreson apoplexy' (1.2.107-8). Falstaff's response is no mere comic aside: the 'falling sickness' the king has 'fall'n into' may lead to the fall of his monarchy. The diagnosis, in this context, highlights the dually comic/subversive, or carnivalesque, nature of Falstaff. Jennifer Richards emphasizes Falstaff's 'remunerative' role as diagnostician in the text.²³ Instead of emphasizing his carnivalesque excess, she argues that Falstaff's particular role here is to remind us of bodily care of political members, an ethic early modern humanist texts also uphold. However, I take a perhaps more radical (or pessimistic) stance towards this diagnostic role: Falstaff's potentially helpful function as expert, who would remind us of the body's lower members, is necessarily pathologized as excessive and parasitical in a culture stratified by class, gender, and physio-political function. His role here, like that of Lear's fool, is that of a ritual healing or diagnosis of social ills condoned by festival culture, but this healing has overtones of theatrical quackery and mountebanking that diabolically mirror the falling sicknesses' associations with both rulership and street beggary.

The inversion or dislocation of the dominant structure of the body politic results in an inversion of the ideal Galenic body, which is masculine, ordered, and well-bred. The phlegmatic or feminine/passive humour dominates over the sanguine/masculine humour. The limbs, or political hierarchies, are unset/unsettled and noble or 'laudable' blood is muddled. Galenic theory held women's anatomy to be an inversion of male anatomy. In this structure, heat signifies masculinity and external genitalia, whereas a lack of heat results in female internal genitalia.²⁴ The Galenic model gave blood a

²³ Jennifer Richards, 'Diagnosing the Body Politic: Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part Two*' in *Literature, Science and Medicine in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Rachel Falconer and Denis Renevey (Tübingen: Narr, 2013), pp. 145-65 (p. 148).

²⁴ Thomas Laqueur summarizes this system: 'women were essentially men in whom a lack of vital heat – of perfection – had resulted in the retention, inside, of structures that in the male are visible without...in this world the vagina is imagined as an interior penis, the labia as foreskin, the uterus as scrotum, and the ovaries as testicles'. See *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 4. Helen King argues that the Galenic association of heat with masculinity, and cold with femininity, was controversial in early modern texts: Hippocrates, who carried equal authority, claims that women are hotter in nature. Disputes amongst ancient authorities 'included inconsistency on the relative temperature of the male and the female. Democratus and Parmonedes regarded women as intensely hot...but Aristotle and Galen refuted this view, regarding women as "cold"'. See *Midwifery, Obstetrics, and the Rise of Gynaecology: The Uses of a Sixteenth-Century Compendium* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 55-6. However, Falstaff's diagnostic comparison of Prince Harry with his brother John of Lancaster and Shakespeare's characterization of the choleric 'Hotspur' in *I Henry IV* seem to uphold Galenic theory as dominant model in the *Henriad*.

gender: men purportedly had warmer, richer, more ‘laudable’ blood.²⁵ Falstaff’s portrayal of the apoplexy affecting Henry IV’s blood problematizes cultural perceptions that ‘royal blood’ was most laudable of all, interrogating the king’s vigour and even his masculinity. Indeed, Falstaff’s description of the king’s blood as ‘lethargic’ characterizes Henry IV’s humoral state as potentially phlegmatic. This diagnosis was gendered feminine in early modern cultural perceptions.²⁶ Phlegm itself in humoral theory is a ‘moist clammy humor associated with the brain’; in the early modern imagination, the humours could instigate both concrete, physiological imbalances, as Henry IV’s falling sickness and transformations in personality and demeanour, and ‘mopish, sluggish behavior’ demonstrate.²⁷

Therefore, the falling sicknesses in early modern culture potentially encode both masculinity, since epilepsy plagues Spartans, Caesars, and ‘great men’, and femininity: a duality particularly relevant to Elizabeth’s late rule. Oswei Temkin notes a conceptual split during Shakespeare’s time between ‘idiopathic epilepsy’, ‘originating in the brain itself’ and charted by classical medical scholars, and ‘sympathetic epilepsy’, originating from ‘some other organ’,²⁸ – most notably the ‘convulsing uterus[es]’ of young virgins, charted by Paracelsus and his classical predecessor, Hippocrates.²⁹ Barrough’s assertion that apoplexy may either be ‘caused of a flegmaticke humor, that is cold, grosse and tough’, or ‘may also be caused of a grosse melancholy humor’, points to Shakespeare’s feminization of Henry IV as cold and phlegmatic within the play.³⁰ Patricia Simons argues that the body’s upright stance in all activities (pissing, sexuality) determines its masculinity and vigour.³¹ Lynn Enterline casts melancholia as ‘disruption’ of masculine identity in Renaissance texts.³² Henry IV’s prone, passive, feminized bodily position in his apoplectic state inverts the ideal visual representation of kingship as active and male.

²⁵ Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

²⁶ Paster, pp. 7-9.

²⁷ Laqueur, p. 35.

²⁸ Oswei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 202.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³⁰ Barrough, sig. C

³¹ Patricia Simons, ‘Manliness and the Visual Semiotics of Bodily Fluids in Early Modern Culture’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39.2 (2009), 331-373 (pp. 331-3).

³² Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 18. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Drew Daniel’s recent study, *The Melancholic Assemblage: Affect and Epistemology in the English Renaissance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), casts melancholy as a fashionable, aristocratic and male condition. Daniel’s representation of the melancholic body’s connection to its cultural, environmental, and material environment, however, supports Mary Floyd-Wilson’s theory of early modern geohumoralism (see below), as well as my own reading of apoplexy as tied to political and theatrical conditions.

Henry IV's imbalanced humours, as they lead to his apoplectic condition, also portray a precarious imbalance of power within his kingdom.

It should be noted that, in Shakespeare's time, femininity was associated as much with diabolical generativity – memorably displayed by Spenser's Errour, who 'bred / A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed, / Sucking upon her poisonous dugs'³³ – as phlegmatic passivity, lethargy, and diminishment. Women were coded as (re)productive but unruly 'leaky vessels' in the Renaissance, exuding milk, blood, urine, wind, watery tears, corporeal matter, and, of course, other bodies.³⁴ Indeed, this duality of passivity/generativity in early modern representations of the feminine plays a substantial role in furthering what is perhaps the most striking structural (and physical) opposition in the *Henriad*, Henry IV and Falstaff. While Henry IV's apoplexy, within a phallogocentric culture, associates him with a feminized lack of virility and bodily self-sufficiency, Falstaff's swollen belly and unruly tongue inverts, yet parallels this cultural symbolism. As Valerie Traub argues in her classic formulation, Falstaff's grotesque body may occupy a space of repressed maternity in the *Henriad*: references to his expansive physique underscore a sense of generativity gone out of bounds.³⁵ His physical corpulence, verbal *copia*, and overwhelming presence all contrast Henry IV's sense of absence and diminishment in the play. Indeed, though scenes including Henry IV are emotionally compelling, his appearances are remarkably few in his namesake play – in merely three scenes (3.1, 4.4, and 4.5) to Falstaff's eight (1.2, 2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.3, and 5.5). Not until he has already been discussed and diagnosed at length by Falstaff, amongst others, does he finally arrive onstage, wherein he pleads for sleep and laments the burdens of the crown. Even his death takes place and is announced offstage, in 5.2, by Warwick. Henry IV, then, is characterized by his extraordinary absence and disappearance through the play, talked and rumoured about by other characters far more than he ever again employs the previously impressive performative and bodily rhetoric of *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV*. Henry IV's apoplexed body, in a theatrical context, occupies a paradox: his affliction is both displayed, in the stage directions and by Henry IV's physical performance, and diffuse, as apoplectic symptoms infuse disparate characterizations and allusions in his absence. Henry IV's body displays a linear progression towards decline in the stage directions. He first arrives in his night gown (3.1). Then, he is carried in on a chair (4.4), and, after he hears the rebels have been defeated, has his first (and only) onstage apoplectic seizure or 'fit' (4.4.114). After this

³³ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1.1.15), ed. by A.C. Hamilton (Harlow: Longman, 2007).

³⁴ Paster, p. 23.

³⁵ As Traub charts, 'in the space of three scenes, Hal calls Falstaff "fat rogue" twice, "damn'd brawn" (pig or fatted swine), "fat-kidney'd rascal," "fatguts," "whoreson round man," "clay-brain'd guts," – "emboss'd [swollen] rascal," and "my sweet beef"'. See Valerie Traub, 'Prince Hal's Falstaff: Positioning Psychoanalysis and the Female Reproductive Body', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.4 (1989) 456-74 (p. 462).

fit, he is carried and placed in bed, where his sleep and physical paralysis mimic death. The stage directions help to visualize his state of passivity and decline. His visualized body demonstrates a loss of control, and more literally, (masculine) verticality: he first stands in a state of undress, then is seated, and finally is prone. The stage directions enable this potentially difficult theatricalization of paralysis. Prince Hal's metacommentary – 'I never thought to hear you speak again' (4.5.91) – suggests that Henry IV's apoplectic imitation of death could potentially fool both son and audience.

On the other hand, Henry IV's apoplexy is equally characterized by his diminishment of physicality, presence, and speech, as compared to his more dominant presence in *Richard II* and *1 Henry IV*. Instead, his ailment seems to spread to other characters and throughout the kingdom itself, almost as if it were a contagion. Hostess Quickly exclaims, 'feel, masters, how I shake' (2.4.105), in an emulation of the trembling or shaking that was a predominant symptom of falling sicknesses. Prince Hal himself complains of becoming 'exceeding weary' (2.2.1) in his first entrance and is accused of speaking 'idlely' by Poins (2.2.29). Lord Northumberland enters onstage falsely or 'crafty-sick' (Induction 37), with a nightcap and staff in hand, visually both paralleling and inverting Henry IV's own entrance. The kingdom itself, at various points, is described in degenerative or apoplectic terms. Henry IV tells Warwick to 'perceive the body of our kingdom / How foul it is, what rank diseases grow' (3.2.38-9). The repetition of 'heavy' following Henry IV's death – 'our argument is all too heavy' (5.2.22-3), 'peace be with him that hath made us heavy!' (5.2.26), 'Peace be with us, lest we be heavier' (5.2.26) – seems to further a passing-on of Henry IV's burdens of rulership, alongside his apoplectic symptoms, to his counsellors and to Henry V. Henry IV is both embodied and disembodied: although he remains offstage, asleep, comatose, or dead for the majority of the play, his apoplexy subtly shapes *2 Henry IV's* overall structure and thematic concerns. As its symptoms include both trembling/erratic motion and coma/immobility, the nature of apoplexy itself, as a physical condition and as a metaphor in the play, allows for this paradoxical incorporation/disincorporation.

Falstaff, on the other hand, enacts an almost travestied metaphysics of presence, most obviously when he asserts himself where he is no longer wanted in the final act. If Henry IV mostly performs a vanishing act in *2 Henry IV's* structure, Falstaff's scenes tend to sprawl, as if his self-generating body also furthers a sense of excess in the play text where he materializes. Falstaff's excess caricatures pregnancy.³⁶ He swells with wind, or the rhetorical copia and delivery long tied to breath and linguistic fertility in

³⁶ Traub, 462.

the Renaissance, and fluid, or heavy drink.³⁷ Falstaff's generative copia/corporeality stands in a relationship of both dichotomy and continuity with Henry IV's falling sickness. Giddiness, falling, vertigo, and epilepsy were associated with hysteria, often termed as a suffocation or strangulation of the womb, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.³⁸ Just as Falstaff's 'wind' and physique contrast with Henry IV's overall silence/absence, when Morton attempts to report Hotspur's death, Lord Northumberland exclaims, 'Thou tremblest, and the whiteness in thy cheek / Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy arrand' (1.1.68-9). Here, Morton opposes physical shaking and a semblance of death, both characteristic symptoms of apoplexy, to speech. The apoplectic body represents what speech cannot. This moment, alongside the Falstaff/Henry IV opposition, serves to differentiate womb (fertile speech, the grotesque body, presence) from tomb (silence, physical shaking, falling, and coma, absence).

At the same time, in several instances throughout the Shakespearean corpus and its source materials, reproduction and the falling sicknesses of vertigo, epilepsy, and apoplexy are treated as part of a continuum of feminized bodily conditions rather than an opposition. Melanie H. Ross, in her examination of *Othello's* pregnancy references, discusses epilepsy as a metaphor for intercourse, conception, and hysteria.³⁹ Kaara Peterson's work on hysteria in Shakespeare and early modern culture traces King Lear's reference to *hysterica passio* – 'O how this mother swells up toward my heart! / *Hysterica passio*, down, thou climbing sorrow, / Thy element's below' (2.4.56-58) – to

³⁷ See Melanie H. Ross, 'Conceiving Jealousy: Othello's Imitated Pregnancy', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 41.1 (2005), 1-17 (p. 1) and Jonathan Gil Harris, 'All Swell That End Swell: Dropsy, Phantom Pregnancy, and the Sound of Deconception in *All's Well That Ends Well*', *Renaissance Drama* 35 (2006), 169-89 (p. 173). In other words, rhetorical delivery and physical delivery are connected here. Patricia Parker categorizes Falstaff as one of her 'literary fat ladies', due to the cultural associations between womb and tongue in rhetorical copia: see *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987). See also Anne-Julia Zwierlein, who charts male pregnancy as a metaphor for evil (which in Falstaff's case, may tie to his figuration as Vice). See 'Male Pregnancies, Virgin Births, Monsters of the Mind: Early Modern Melancholia and (Cross) Gendered Constructions of Creativity' in *The Literature of Melancholia: Early Modern to Postmodern*, ed. by Martin Middeke and Christina Wald (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 35-49 (p. 42). Not only do Ross and Zwierlein tie language and rhetorical invention to conception, but delivery itself had an uneasy relationship to femininity since the classical era: see Jody Enders, 'Delivering Delivery: Theatricality and the Emasculation of Eloquence', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*. 15.3 (1997), 253-278. For swellings of water, heavy drinking and their connection to pregnancy, false pregnancy, and dropsy, see Harris, who ties false pregnancy in *All's Well* to crises of dynastic childlessness in the Tudor body politic (170), a concern that would certainly also inform the portrayal of Falstaff's swelling in *2 Henry IV*.

³⁸ See Temkin, 194-202; Kaara L. Peterson, *Popular Medicine, Hysterical Disease, and Social Controversy in Shakespeare's England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 3 and 39; Ross, 4-5; Patricia Parker, 'Shakespeare and Rhetoric: "Dilation" and "Delation" in *Othello*' in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey H. Hartman (New York: Routledge, 1985), pp. 54-74 (p. 63); and Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 114. Cf. also Peterson's reading of 'revivification narratives, or tales of miraculous resuscitations of female patients believed dead but merely suffering from grievous hysterical ailments' (p. 4) with Henry IV's appearance of death and resuscitation in the crown-theft scene.

³⁹ Ross, 4.

Richard Mainy's purported condition of male hysteria in Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603). Mainy's claims of hysteria derived from his symptoms, which included 'wind in the bottom of the belly', a 'great swelling', and an 'extraordinary giddiness in the head'.⁴⁰ In Harsnett's narrative, Mainy is ultimately mocked for his claims of hysteria and diagnosed instead with vertigo. Peterson hence reads Lear's hysteria as both a feminization of the body and a self-delusion on par with Mainy. Tsu-Chung Su interprets Lear's false hysteria as a fear of metamorphosis into a female body in a culture that still gave credence to the Aristotelian one-sex model, where female bodies inverted males'.⁴¹ Peterson nevertheless argues that, while there was a symptomatic continuum between hysteria and vertigo, male vertigo would 'not have the same charged gender implications that "the mother" does' in early modern thought.⁴² Yet 'giddiness', falling, epilepsy, and apoplexy all seem to take on a charged feminization of the male body in in *Othello*, *King Lear*, and of course *2 Henry IV*. Indeed, the revival of Henry IV's body, presumed to be dead, in the crown theft scene appears to parallel cultural 'revivification narratives' in hysterical female patients.⁴³

The early modern continuity between male falling sicknesses and female hysteria was in part based on their similar symptoms, and in part due to cultural and medical parallels between the brain and womb as vital, generative, and often afflicted organs. Mary Thomas Crane observes that the term 'pregnancy' was primarily used to describe (generally male) cognition rather than physical (female) pregnancy until the mid-seventeenth century. The 'uterus resembled the brain', as an organ responsible for sense and motion.⁴⁴ Cultural associations between mental and physical conception and medical beliefs about the brain and womb seem to have reinforced one another. For instance, Galen 'identified the parts of the brain by nicknames derived from their supposed visual resemblance to the reproductive and excretory organs'.⁴⁵ Shakespeare often juxtaposes language of conceiving, bearing, and labouring to thought, invention, and wit. Ulysses, in *Troilus and Cressida*, posits the activities of his brain as a gestation: 'I have a young conception in my brain; / Be you my time to bring it to some shape' (1.3.312-13). The conflation of brain and womb lends a dark cast to Sonnet 86, as a rival's verse 'did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse, / making their tomb the

⁴⁰ Samuel Harsnett, 'A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures' (London, 1603). Rpt. In F.W. , *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), p. 56.

⁴¹ Tsu-Chung Su, 'When the Womb Heats Up, The Vapors Rise, & The Mother Suffocates: The Question of Lear's "Mother"', *Tamkang Review* 35 (3-4), 207-33 (p. 224).

⁴² Peterson, p. 56, n. 63.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Mary Thomas Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading With Cognitive Theory*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 162.

⁴⁵ C.F. Goodey, *A History of Intelligence and 'Intellectual Disability': The Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), p. 132.

womb wherein they grew' (3-4). Richard II characterizes his brain as female when he compares his cell to the world: 'My brain I'll prove the female to my soul, / My soul the father, and these two beget / A generation of still-breeding thoughts' (5.5.7-9). In this passage, the brain appears to act as the organic and potentially dangerous matrix for the more transcendent, masculine soul, or spirit, evoking Galenic and Aristotelian models that opposed spirit or male 'seed' to the often disordered matter of the female womb.

Indeed, references to brain and womb together in Shakespeare tend to underscore social or physical disorder.⁴⁶ Anna-Julia Zwierlein argues that the brain's conception of ideas carried the potential for 'feminine "monstrosity"'⁴⁷: just as a mother could conceive a monstrous birth, the brain could conceive a monstrous thought. Caesar makes this comparison comical when he speaks of heavy drinking in *Antony and Cleopatra*: 'It's monstrous labor when I wash my brain / And it grow fouler' (2.7.98-9). Falstaff similarly associates mental and physical (monstrous) conception as he lauds his self-generating wit directly before he compares himself to a mother sow:

The brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent any thing that intends to laughter more than I invent or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men....I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath overwhelm'd all her litter but one (2.1.7-12).

His self-description as a cause or generator of invention situates his unruly generativity in both brain and womb. Just as the uterus is generally the distressed organ in female melancholy and hysteria, the head, and more specifically the brain, figure as the most prominent and affected body parts in apoplexy, epilepsy, vertigo, and male melancholy.⁴⁸ The brain acted as the primary seat of masculine disorders, and the womb was the primary instigator of female melancholy and hysteria. These two organs therefore operate as overdetermined signifiers of gender and disease: in medical and cultural discourse, the brain and womb are gendered oppositely, yet affected very similarly in their functions, symptoms, and afflictions. Diseases of the brain could potentially adopt nefariously feminized traits and characterizations, as we see in the cases of Richard Mainy, Othello, and Henry IV. Apoplexy, then, as a disease primarily of the brain, emulates problems of the womb, as Falstaff's disorderly (male) pregnancy of body and wit mirrors Henry IV's 'perturbation of the brain' (1.2.116). In 2 *Henry IV*, the body's swelling and wind in hysteria/falling sickness appear to be attached to Falstaff, and the giddiness of the head to Henry IV, in accordance with their roles as

⁴⁶ See Crane's analysis of pregnancy as conception and contamination in *Measure for Measure in Shakespeare's Brain*, pp. 156-77.

⁴⁷ Zwierlein, p. 38.

⁴⁸ Carol Thomas Neely, *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 93.

political head/body. The fact that Falstaff, as part of a less legitimate social order than the king and his advisors, diabolically self-generates, even as the 'head', Henry IV, becomes giddy and declines, demonstrates the play's upheavals of sociopolitical hierarchy.

In both the falling sicknesses' connections with hysteria and the Vice figure's male pregnancy, crises of the body politic in *2 Henry IV* are hence situated in the feminized body, and more specifically the brain and womb. As Falstaff exclaims in 4.3.22, 'my womb, my womb, my womb undoes me'. As Chris Laoutaris charts, the early modern theatre had a vexed relationship with crises of conception and maternity.⁴⁹ 'Anatomy theaters' where surgeons and experts inspected female bodies became spaces of 'carnival and social inversion', and they influenced representations of maternity and femininity on the Renaissance stage.⁵⁰ Peterson also argues for an implicit link between hysteria and metatheatre: she labels Hermione's emulation of death in *The Winter's Tale* 'hysterical theater'.⁵¹ Feminine generativity and diminishment thus both oppose and intersect with one another in *2 Henry IV*'s conditions of a destabilized, feminized, and theatricalized body politic.

If Falstaff and Henry IV are Hal's two father figures in *1 Henry IV*, in *2 Henry IV* they are the prince's two 'mothers', dual afflictions of the political body that must be exorcised to make way for Henry V's martial agenda. After Henry IV's death, Hal laments, 'My father is gone wild into his grave; / For in his tomb lie my affections' (5.2.123-4). This line is commonly glossed as symbolic of Hal burying his wilder youth with his father (the Riverside editors read 'affections' as 'unruly inclinations' here), but Henry IV's 'wildness' could be taken more literally here, as a physical trembling and mental weakening.⁵² 'Affections' can also imply both passion and disease.⁵³ By burying his wilder affections with his father, Henry V potentially buries the feminized body, with its ties to sensation, and its physical/political afflictions and disorders. Hal buries one 'mother', and banishes another: Falstaff the 'surfeit-swelled' (5.5.50), who is told to 'make less thy body hence' (5.5.52). As Patricia Parker argues, his banishment can be read as a symbolic exile of the feminine, or at least the androgynous, in the *Henriad*

⁴⁹ Chris Laoutaris, *Shakespearean Maternities: Crises of Conception in Early Modern England* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008), p. 13.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 51. See also Laoutaris's analysis of maternity, anatomy, and 'diseased femininity' (p. 67) in *Hamlet*, pp. 61-80.

⁵¹ Peterson, p. 19.

⁵² See *OED*, "wild" sense 12a: 'Not having control of one's mental faculties; demented, out of one's wits; distracted; hence in weakened sense, Extremely foolish or unreasonable; holding absurd or fantastic views (cf. A. 13)'.
⁵³ See *OED*, 'affection', sense II, and sense II.7: 'An abnormal bodily state; a disease; a medical complaint or condition. Now usu. with *of* or modifying word indicating the site of the disease'.

cycle.⁵⁴ Alternatively, this twofold banishment of feminized surfeit and surcease can be compared to Hal's disclaimer after he wears his father's crown, 'if it did infect my blood with joy, / Or swell my thoughts to any strain of pride' (4.5.169-70). Here the blood and mind are infected, but also swelled and 'strained': a strain could here indicate lineage, but more concretely germination, feminine fertility, and male seed, just as swelling could indicate both the female body and the male member.⁵⁵ Here, Henry V appropriates both masculine and feminine conception alongside the crown, in a more positive metaphor of reproduction and gender crossing. At the play's end, Henry V promises to his advisors that he will 'be your father and your brother too; / Let me but bear your love, I'll bear your cares' (5.2.57-8), a masculine model that also arguably takes up the play's metaphors of the womb, childbearing, and bodily androgyny in a more socially productive sense.⁵⁶ In other words, it is perhaps not the feminized or hermaphroditic body in itself that produces disordered conditions for the state, but the more precise physical and political contexts that engender these symptoms, which in the case of the *Henriad* cycle are regicide, rebellion, and apoplexy.

II. Cures: War, Sack, and Sleep

The cures for Henry IV's apoplexy – war, sack, and sleep – continue the head/body, male/female, and king/subjects inversions that Falstaff's diagnosis, and role as diagnostician, introduces. To balance the four humours of an individual body, Galenic physicians would have used various methods, including physic or bloodletting, herbals or 'simples' with a single ingredient, purgatives, and amalgamated potions or concoctions.⁵⁷ The text of *2 Henry IV* cites at least two of these methods, bloodletting and simple/potion use, as potential cures for England's body politic: legitimate bloodletting through war and the illegitimate potion propounded by Falstaff:sack. Shakespeare depicts war as a healing physic with the potential to cure physical apoplexy and social paralysis in *Coriolanus*. In *Coriolanus*, a serving man contends:

Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men (4.5.222-6).

⁵⁴ Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies*, p. 22.

⁵⁵ See *OED*, 'strain', especially senses 3, 'the germinal vesicle in the yolk of an egg (obs.)', 5, 'Pedigree, lineage, ancestry, descent', and 7, 'A race, breed; a variety developed by breeding'.

⁵⁶ In this scene, Henry V also declares mourning for his father as a 'joint burden laid upon us all' (5.2.55), perhaps indicated statecraft as a shared condition in his view. Cf. this father/brother promise with Queen Elizabeth's dual self-fashioning as virgin wife and mother to her people.

⁵⁷ Lane, pp. xiii-xl.

While rebellion and war may seem more of a problem than a solution during Henry IV's reign, his early ignorance of the growing divisions within his kingdom in Act I displays his aging political body's desire for rest and peace. The serving man's speech and Falstaff's diagnosis connect apoplexy's medical definition as lethargy, sleepiness, deafness, and a loss of physical senses to Shakespeare's allegory of troubled political succession.

This analogy between bloodletting and war constructs peace as an inherently plethoric condition. A plethoric body 'could not use up all the blood it had produced'.⁵⁸ In peacetime, likewise, extraneous members of an overpopulated state are not purged from a sluggish, inactive, and feminized body politic. The Archbishop's claim that 'we are all diseases'd' (4.1.54) and 'Have brought ourselves into a burning fever/ And we must bleed for it' (4.1.56-7) evokes this metaphor of a plethoric kingdom. The cure for this plethora is to 'diet rank minds sick of happiness, / And purge th'obstructions which begin to stop / Our very veins of life' (4.1.64-6). Shakespeare portrays peace in this dialogue as a mental disease, perhaps caused by phlegm or by cold, feminine blood, creating political stagnation.⁵⁹ Shakespeare therefore presents peace as an imbalance rather than a balance of social order, requiring war's purging or bloodletting of an overabundant population. The grotesque imagery of plethoric, feminized peace, of course, directly counters the Elizabethan cult's own propaganda of a virginal, self-contained nation/queen.

Derrida theorizes the concept of Western 'phallogocentrism' in his 'Plato's Pharmacy'.⁶⁰ His term embodies Western culture's privileging of logos – masculinity, light, and presence – over silence, absence, and femininity as the centre of power in its discourses. This phallogocentrism manifests itself in the ideal Galenic concept of the body that Henry IV's apoplexy inverts. Crooke hypothesizes that women and their blood are cooler in nature, 'not altogether of so hot a temper or constitution, because she should have a superfluity of bloode for the nourishment of the infant, as also that the partes of generation for want of heate to thrust them forth remaining within'.⁶¹ Barrough's Galenic analysis and Hippocrates's famous essay on falling sicknesses, 'On the Sacred Disease', indicate that a predisposition for apoplexy arises from either 'melancholic' or 'phlegmatic' blood – again, humours that medical and cultural authorities considered more feminine, and humours associated with a dysfunctional brain. In this context, Falstaff's blood-warming 'sack cure' begins to seem like a justifiable healing incorporated into the history plays' phallogocentric, physiopolitical

⁵⁸ Paster, p. 74.

⁵⁹ Crooke, 40.

⁶⁰ Jacques Derrida, 'Plato's Pharmacy' in *Dissemination*, trans. by Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 84-5.

⁶¹ Crooke, 200.

power structures – masculine, laudable bloodlines. Touting sack as if it were a Galenic medicinal simple, Falstaff calls Prince John of Lancaster, who is Hal’s brother, and his fellow abstainers ‘demure’, with blood that is ‘over-cool[ed]’ by ‘thin drink’, ‘fall[ing] into a king of male green-sickness’, and who will only ‘get wenches’ ‘when they marry’, in contrast to ‘Prince Harry’, who, though he inherited the ‘cold-blood’ from ‘his father’, has become ‘very hot and valiant’ through his consumption of ‘sherris’ (4.3.90-122). This warming ‘cure’ recalls Galenic and Aristotelian beliefs that heat is the primary sexual difference between male and female bodies. Though the importance of Falstaff’s claims to restore the humoural imbalances in Henry IV’s dynasty through drinking and carousing may not rise to the more visceral metaphor of war as bloodletting, Henry V’s success depends on his knowledge and centralization of all the body politic’s lower members.⁶² His warmer, more masculine blood would arguably be a factor in his military successes as well. Phlebotomy and potion (sack) are therefore both offered as cures for a phlegmatic dynasty, prone to paralysis.

In 2 *Henry IV*’s first act, Shakespeare dislocates the noble limbs of official rule by that symbol of what Mikhail Bakhtin refers to as the festive ‘material lower bodily stratum’: the mouths and stomachs of Falstaff and his Cheapside cohorts.⁶³ C.L. Barber argues that Falstaff’s role as clown within the history plays warns of potential ‘anarchy’ as this Vice-figure’s role as ‘Lord of Misrule’ becomes an ‘everyday racket’ rather than a culturally sanctioned festive occasion.⁶⁴ By extension, Barber’s appropriate choice of the term ‘racket’ to analyze Falstaff’s situation within the *Henriad* perfectly describes his behaviour in this scene as a diagnosing, theatrical mountebank or an unofficial empiric who feels the pulse of the political body before its official physicians. Falstaff’s role as diagnostician within this work may also correspond to what both Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais* and Michael Bristol describe as a ‘logic of crowning and uncrowning’⁶⁵ that accompanies the folk-festival tradition, as the crown is represented and displaced by a ‘meat-pie’ on Carnival’s head in popular representations.⁶⁶ False physicians, as memorably depicted in Ben Jonson’s *Volpone*, performed in the street

⁶² See Mary Floyd-Wilson, ‘English Epicures and Scottish Witches’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57.2 (2006), 131-61 (p. 145). Floyd-Wilson discusses Henry V’s character, and Falstaff’s diagnosis of ‘green-sickness’, within the context of ‘geohumoralism’: his balanced body contrasts with the overheated Scotsman Hotspur and the cold-bloodedness of his Norman heritage that manifests in his father, Henry IV, and his brother, John of Lancaster.

⁶³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 368. For Shakespeare’s synecdoche of commoners as mouths and stomachs, see *Coriolanus* 1.1.204-6: ‘They said they were an-hungry; sighed forth proverbs, / That hunger broke stone-walls, that dogs must eat / That meat was made for mouths...’

⁶⁴ C.L. Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 13-14.

⁶⁵ Bakhtin, p. 275, and Michael Bristol, ‘Carnival and the Institutions of Theater in Elizabethan England’, *ELH* 50.4 (1983), 637-54 (p. 646).

⁶⁶ Bristol, 643.

theatre of early modern life. In the play's destabilizing performance of apoplexy, Falstaff's 'quacking' diagnosis obtains an unusual amount of legitimacy. As a performing Galenic diagnostician, Falstaff is able to provide a running commentary on the very state of political disease he helps to further.

Afflictions of brain, blood, limb, and ear unite in Falstaff's diagnosis of a dislocated body politic unable to fully mobilize or contain its limbs. Continual puns on 'fall' or 'falling' recur throughout *2 Henry IV* as symptoms of these political, bodily, and theatrical conditions. After the crown-theft scene, Henry IV enjoins his son to 'Stay but a little, for my cloud of dignity / Is held from falling with so weak a wind / That it will quickly drop' (4.5. 98-100). The 'weak wind' here refers to his failing lungs; these lungs signify the political rhetoric and theatrics necessary to a dignified embodiment of the nation. Though the image of a falling king represents Henry IV's corporal mortality, the play's 'falling' puns also reference the dynastic continuity of his immortal state in the Kantorowiczian sense: in medieval and early modern dual kingship, the king's spiritual body politic continues through his family line. The rebel Lord Hastings's statement that 'though here we fall down, / We have supplies to second our attempt' (4.2.44-5), 'And heir from heir shall hold his quarrel up / Whiles England shall have generation', (4.2.48-9) situates this cultural narrative of spiritual succession within Shakespeare's history cycle, in which the present monarch who 'falls down' is generatively replaced by his second in line, in this case Henry V.

In its symptomatic mimicry of sleep – and its 'brother', death – Henry IV's apoplexy dramatizes this generative/degenerative opposition. Shakespeare's sleep cure for Henry IV's apoplexy points out the inherent contradictions of the early modern body politic, as feudal traditions merged, often problematically, with the emergent imperialism of the Tudor dynasty. The sleep cure was a conventional method for curing apoplexy in early modern medical texts. Peter Lowe's *Whole Course of Chirurgerie* recounts one cause of apoplexy to be the wrong way of sleeping: we are not to sleep 'on the backe, for that maketh heat in the raines, apoplexie...and various other accidents: in no wise, the handes under the head, as some do...sleepe not soone after meate'.⁶⁷ Barrough likewise advocates a 'sleep cure', or an orderly routine of sleeping, to regulate the troubled brain that gives rise to falling sicknesses.⁶⁸ The 'sleep cure' for apoplexy set out in *2 Henry IV* appears to resolve politico-theatrical disjunctions, yet it results in exposing them. The imperial monarchy emphasized a power that rests with the head of state and head of the Church alone. As Queen Elizabeth I was famously purported to say to her secretary Robert Cecil near the moment of her death after he enjoined her to rest: 'the word must'

⁶⁷ Peter Lowe, *The Whole Course of Chirurgerie* (London: Thomas Purfoot, 1597), sig. F3.

⁶⁸ Barrough, sig. Ciiij.

is ‘not to be used to princes...little man, little man if your father had lived ye durst not have said so much: but thou knowest I must die and that maketh thee so presumptuous’.⁶⁹ The imperial monarchy bespoke both exhaustion, as the role of the prince must be continually performed in public ceremonies, and dependency, as the early modern monarch was effectively dependent on her court, parliament, advisers, and subjects. To alleviate the full burden of ruling, a king must accept a certain amount of power sharing with his ‘members’, limbs of counsel, and, ultimately, his or her heir, so that the full weight of authority’s crown is not continuously, dangerously resting upon the head of state.

III. Propping the Head

Shakespeare draws his allegorical treatment of apoplexy from early modern cultural metaphors of the royal crown, as well as medical theories about the physical crown of the head. The head/crown/skull becomes a focal point for Henry IV’s apoplectic conditions. In *2 Henry IV*, Shakespeare reveals the ceremonial crown – as well as the centralization of authority in the king’s physical and political ‘head’ – as a theatrical prop. This crown/prop acts as an extension of the king’s (and actor’s) body: metaphorically, the extension assumes dominance over the body of the king himself. Kantorowicz asserts that ‘the crown operates as a material symbol’ of the more immortal aspects of king and kingdom and ‘extends the king’s natural body into his political, theological one’, representing the ‘dynastic perpetuity’ of the body politic.⁷⁰ The temporary theft of Henry IV’s crown by his son literalizes this dynastic symbol and de-problematizes the issue of continuity when the king enters the liminal, undead state of apoplexy.⁷¹ The crown is given its own agency and sentience, as Hal narrates, ‘I spake unto this crown as having sense / And thus upbraided it: “The care on thee depending / Hath fed on the body of my father”’ (4.4.157-9).

The crown reifies and inverts the ideological discourse of the king’s two bodies: the crown here represents the spiritual symbol of dynasty that the literal body of the king must wear. The discursive crown itself – and the dynastic, theological power it symbolizes – ‘feeds’ and self-perpetuates upon the physical body of Henry IV. The feeding of the crown upon the body of the king reverses rituals of medical cannibalism

⁶⁹ Catherine Loomis, ‘Elizabeth Southwell’s Manuscript Account of the Death of Queen Elizabeth’, *ELR* 26.3 (1996), 482-509 (p. 485).

⁷⁰ Kantorowicz, p. 341.

⁷¹ A concern with this metaphor of dynastic succession arguably exists even in our modern democracy, as American presidents undergoing medical operations that render them unconscious must temporarily cede power to whoever is next in line.

and sympathy as healing practices.⁷² Cannibal cures often centred upon the skull and head as particularly restorative body parts for problems of the head or brain, in keeping with principles of sympathy (like cures like). Paracelsus advocates ‘blood from a decapitated man’ and ‘pieces of human skull’ to cure epilepsy.⁷³ The surgical authority Girolamo Ruscelli proposes anointing the head with plasters or ointments to remedy the falling sicknesses, in a ritual that structurally emulates the coronation of a king.⁷⁴ Elizabeth Lane Furdell marks Paracelsus’s use of an ‘ointment made of usnea’, or a moss grown from skulls, as a treatment for injuries.⁷⁵ More broadly – and alarmingly – Margaret E. Owens discusses the collection of ‘blood from beheaded convicts’ for the ‘sick to drink’ as a common practice in early modern Germany.⁷⁶ Catherine Sanok also posits that early modern hagiographies of Henry VI anticipate the theatricality of Shakespeare’s histories. The act of wearing Henry VI’s velvet cap, much as a common actor would costume himself as a king, was a practice ‘renowned for curing headaches’.⁷⁷ In Shakespeare’s representation of apoplexy, the actor who wears Henry IV’s crown performs, instead, a weakening political body that is infected, even cannibalized, by this prop. This mutual debilitation of skull and crown contrasts with what Gail Kern Paster and Mary Thomas Crane read as a lively, ‘dialogical interplay’ between skin and skull, life and death in Holbein’s *Ambassadors* painting and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.⁷⁸ Paster and Crane argue that the artistry of Holbein’s painting and the dark comedy of Hamlet’s interaction with the skull defer its power as a symbol.⁷⁹

In 2 *Henry IV*, the ‘crown’ of Henry IV’s head instead emerges as a doubly overdetermined, self-cannibalizing symbol of political and theatrical fragility: the crown

⁷² Louise Noble explores Renaissance practices of medical cannibalism in *Titus Andronicus* and *Othello*, in “‘And Make Two Pasties of Your Shameful Heads’”: Medicinal Cannibalism and Healing the Body Politic in *Titus Andronicus*’, *ELH* 70.3 (2003), 677-708; and ‘The *Fille Vièrge* as Pharmakon: The Therapeutic Value of Desdemona’s Corpse’ in *Disease, Diagnosis, and Cure on the Early Modern Stage*, ed. by Stephanie Moss and Kaara L. Peterson (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 135-50.

⁷³ Temkin, p. 176.

⁷⁴ Girolamo Ruscelli, *A Very Excellent and Profitable Booke Conteyning Six Hundred Foure Score and Odde Experienced Medicines Apperteyning Unto Physick and Surgerie* (London: Henry Denham, 1569).

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Lane Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine in Early Modern England* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), p. 8.

⁷⁶ Margaret E. Owens, *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p. 124.

⁷⁷ Catherine Sanok, ‘Good King Henry and the Genealogy of Shakespeare’s First History Plays’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 40.1 (2010), 37-63 (p. 47). See also Gail Kern Paster and Mary Thomas Crane, ‘The Pith and Marrow of Our Attribute: Dialogue of Skin and Skull in *Hamlet* and Holbein’s *Ambassadors*’, *Textual Practice* 23.2 (2009), 247-65 and Andrew Sofer, ‘The Skull on the Renaissance Stage: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Props’, *English Literary Renaissance* 28.1 (1998), 47-74 and *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003) in which Sofer further explores skulls’ and bones’ use as emblematic, recyclable props in sixteenth and seventeenth century theatrical practices (‘Skull’, 62).

⁷⁸ Paster and Crane, 260.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 254 and 261.

of the state consumes the skull of Henry IV, even as the crown of the head was consumed as a cure for the falling sickness in early modern medical tracts. Henry IV's giddy head is thus doubly crowned, as the physical 'crown' of the head joins with the metaphysical 'crown' of the state in a successful, spectacular 'propping up' of the king/actor. The public performances of the monarch holds off political paralysis in *2 Henry IV*, from staging battles to controlling the reputation of the Bolingbroke dynasty, 'lest rest and lying still might make' others 'look / Too near unto my state' (4.4.210-12). Without constant, 'giddy' motion and signifiers of virility, the king's body may appear all-too-human to his subjects. Early modern monarchs must uphold the spectacular representation of power, wearying their corporal forms as they pass into old age. 'Uneasy' – and perhaps inevitably apoplexed – is 'the head that wears the crown' of political control (3.1.31).

Alongside the dual symbolism of political and physical 'heads' made visible in this representation of a cannibal crown, the head and brain were often conflated medicinally and metaphorically in Shakespeare's time. Esther Cohen argues that theories of the brain as the nervous system's command centre began to gain acceptance in late medieval culture, to the point where 'it became easy to conflate soul, head, and the senses'.⁸⁰ Cohen ties the centrality of the brain to the popularity of judicial beheading as state punishment;⁸¹ Owens similarly connects the primacy of the head in representations of the body politic to decapitation practices.⁸² Hence, the brain's operation as command centre could be connected to symbols of the heads of state as vertical bodily and political authorities. This conflated symbolism of the brain and head is ritually overturned in practices of execution, and, in *2 Henry IV*, through the political symbolism of apoplexy as disorder. As in the case of Henry IV, dysfunctions of the 'head' could also correspond to dysfunctions of the 'brain' in medical texts, and vice versa. Galen posited mental impairment as a result of both the interior brain matter and the external shape of the head, including the organization of sutures along the skull,⁸³ although the question of whether and how much head shape influenced the inner structure of the brain was still largely up for debate.⁸⁴ Actual illustrations of abnormal heads and skulls were in fact most often situated within discussions of epilepsy and apoplexy in early modern medical texts.⁸⁵ The brain-head connection in mental disorders, while controversial, could potentially be most accepted, then, in the specific

⁸⁰ Esther Cohen, 'The Meaning of the Head in High Medieval Culture' in *Disembodied Heads in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Catrien Santing, Barbara Baert, and Anita Traninger (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 59-76 (pp. 69-70).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁸² Owens, p. 28.

⁸³ Goodey, pp. 222-4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

context of falling sicknesses. Shakespeare's tendency to allegorize what we now would consider 'psychological' or 'mental' disability – so often conceptualized as solely interior, individual, and private matters in our own culture – as external political disorder in his characterizations of Caesar, Lear, and Henry IV was possibly enabled by the falling sicknesses' unique combination of internal and external abnormality in these medical theories. Henry IV's 'perturbation of the brain' (1.2.116), is also described as an 'incessant care and labor of his mind' which 'hath wrought the mure that should confine it in / so thin that life looks through [and will break out]' (4.4.118-20). While 'mind' may seem a more metaphysical or psychological term to us than an organic, physical brain, Clarence describes Henry IV's mind as going out of bounds, breaking out of the 'mure' or wall that surrounds it: this 'wall' could most literally be the skull, worn abnormally thin through apoplexy, the physical body, or the boundary between physical/spiritual body of the king.⁸⁶

Henry IV's apoplexy presents a dysfunctional boundary-crossing between interior and exterior in this passage, as his brain troubles extend to the state. The conflation of Henry IV's degenerating brain and political headship perhaps inspire Lord Hasting's description of a divided, hydra-headed state, 'divisions' that

Are in three heads: one power against the French,
And one against Glendower; perforce a third
Must take up us: so is the unfirm king
In three divided (1.3.70-4).

The predominant use of heads and skulls as props in Shakespearean and early modern drama further the political allegory of Henry IV's 'falling' head and brain. Carol Chillington Rutter remarks that Shakespeare had ten plays that necessitated heads as props, five of which would be recently decapitated.⁸⁷ The importance of the decapitated head as a political icon and theatrical prop can be recalled by Jack Cade's two kissing heads on pikes, as well as Margaret's grisly display of York's head to overlook York's

⁸⁶ This is not to say, however, that 'mind', 'head', and 'brain' always necessarily carry the same meaning in either Shakespeare or early modern discourse. Elsewhere, mind and brain seem to take on the more differentiated meanings familiar to modern readers: cf. *Macbeth*, 'Art though not, fatal vision, sensible / To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but / A dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain' (2.1.36-39), where the brain has a more organic function than the mind's creative agency. Henry IV also seems to separate head from brain in terms of class and political hierarchies (even as these hierarchies are overturned by his own disorder) in his lament for sleep, as his headship is set against a shipboy's comforted brains: 'Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast / Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains / In cradle of the rude imperious surge...canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose / To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude, / And in the calmest and most stillest night, / With all appliances and means to boot, / Deny it to a king? Then happy low, lie down! / Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown' (3.1.18-31).

⁸⁷ Carol Chillington Rutter, 'Talking Heads' in *Shakespeare and the Making of Theatre*, ed. by Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Bridget Escolme (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 102-27.

gates, in the *Henry VI* cycle. Henry IV's apoplexy, with its brain/head connection, becomes a slowly ritualized decapitation of Henry IV and the power of sovereignty he represents, culminating in the crown-theft scene.

IV. Giddy Head, Giddy Public: The Topsy-Turvy State

In *2 Henry IV*, the paralysis of Henry IV's head – its failure to be propped up by visual manifestations of physical and political power – spreads to the 'senses' crucial to political theatre: the tongue, eye, ear, and lungs. The actor must harness these same body parts and senses in an effective performance. Shakespeare demonstrates the importance of these parts to healthy political functioning through the figure of Fame, or Rumor. 'Rumor' opens the play, inveighing us to 'open' our 'ears; for which of you will stop / The vent of hearing when loud Rumor speaks?' (Induction 1-2). The Riverside edition of *2 Henry IV* notes that this depiction hearkens back to Virgil's *fama*, a monster covered with 'eyes, ears, and tongues'. Rumor or Fama embodies the body politic's 'senses' that are necessary to public rhetoric.⁸⁸ In *Renaissance Earwitnesses*, Keith Botelho argues that, for early modernists, Rumor (as opposed to the more personal, feminized realm of gossip) signified a disruption of official, masculine authority on a 'macrocosmic' scale.⁸⁹ Botelho describes Elizabeth I's robe in her famous Rainbow Portrait, painted with multiple ears and eyes, as symbolic of her mastery over the masculine domain of Rumor.⁹⁰ Rumor's cataclysmic appearance onstage at the beginning of *2 Henry IV* underpins the failure of Henry IV's own physical and political senses, and the oncoming rebellion facing his state. The successful early modern monarch must incorporate, master, and perform public rhetoric, behaving as both actor and playwright of the political arena – a failure to do so leads to political paralysis.

The opening Induction's dichotomy of the 'open' and the 'stopped' ear contrasts Henry IV, given his issues with 'hearing' and rumor that permeate the play, with the audience 'members'' comprehension. The stage itself becomes a recursive 'double' or representation of the body politic. Motion and sense, ear and tongue function to connect

⁸⁸ G.R. Boys-Stones argues that *2 Henry IV*'s 'fama' character can be used as a 'personification of epic discourse', even of the 'epic poet'; see *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 160. Meredith Evans asserts that, as an embodiment of something fluid, discursive, and abstract, this Rumor figure is a paradox, a persona that 'threatens the ontological stability of bodies and institutions'; see 'Rumor, the Breath of Kings, and the Body of Law in *2 Henry IV*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60.1 (2009), 1-24 (p. 6).

⁸⁹ Keith M. Botelho, *Renaissance Earwitnesses: Rumor and Early Modern Masculinity* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 8 and 10.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

‘discourse about discourse’, in other words rhetoric and theatrics, to the body politic.⁹¹ Throughout Shakespeare’s histories, Henry IV and V must thus employ ear and tongue successfully in order to continue their dynasty. Carla Mazzio observes that the tongue is perhaps the most ‘ambivalent’ bodily organ in Shakespeare’s time, ‘encod[ing] crises of logic, of language, and of sense’ as well as being ‘the most powerful and most vulnerable member of “man”’: ‘fantasies of the tongue’s mobility were often explicitly linked to disturbances of social and political order’.⁹² The ability to control the production of cultural discourse through the tongue remains under the threat of falling sicknesses, through which Shakespeare symbolizes political decline and paralysis.

Falling sicknesses operate as a focal point for early modern discursive anxieties, as metatheatrical signifiers of both monarchy and beggarmod, to return to Paré’s description of beggars and criminals who counterfeit this debility. Temkin observes that beggars ‘found it profitable to simulate’ the falling sickness to the point of the so-called ‘Counterfet Cranke’ – the ‘cranke’ was the beggar’s term for seizure – emerging as a regular feature of early modern life, even as classical texts link the falling sickness to nobility and greatness.⁹³ Indeed, beggars, actors, and kings all depend on a rhetoric of either power or powerlessness for their continuing livelihood. Kingship in the early modern era therefore transitions from being defined by inward qualities of ‘being’ to Machiavellian, theatrical qualities of ‘seeming’, or ‘performing’ virtue or acts of war. According to Machiavelli, a prince must play the part of both lion and fox: in physiopolitical terms, a monarch must fully embody motion/force as well as sense/cunning.⁹⁴ In this dialectic, beggars mimic Caesar’s disease to promote their trademark debility, and kings undergo an increasingly complex publicization of their

⁹¹ Carla Mazzio, ‘Sins of the Tongue’ in *The Body in Parts*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997) pp. 53-81 (p. 54). As Stephen Greenblatt famously argues in ‘Invisible Bullets’, a ‘mastery of language’ is equivalent to a ‘mastery of politics’ in Shakespeare’s time (36); see ‘Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*’ in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (London: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 18-47 (p. 36). Diederichs observes that Shakespeare contrasts Richard II’s ‘toxic’, ‘unruly’ tongue with Bolingbroke’s ‘controlled’ and ‘civilized’ tongue in *Richard II* (p. 26).

⁹² Mazzio, pp. 53 and 57.

⁹³ Temkin, pp. 166-7. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines ‘crank’ as one who feigns any sickness (s.v. ‘crank, n.3’), tracing its origins to the Dutch ‘krank’, or ‘sick/ill’, yet cites Thomas Harman’s *Cauet for Commen Cursetors* (1567) in its list of examples, which defines ‘cranke’ more specifically as a falling sickness: ‘These that do counterfet the Cranke be yong knaues and yonge harlots, that depely dissemble the falling sicknes. For the Cranke in their language is the fallyng euyll’ (sig. Dii). Bryan Reynolds corroborates Temkin’s research, also adding that ‘theatre’ both influenced and was influenced by a ‘criminal culture’ of vagabonds, beggars, and gypsies; see *Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 115. Faced with the decision between honor and life, Falstaff professes the belief that “to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed” (5.4.117-19) – a potential justification for counterfeiting apoplexy on the part of landless beggars.

⁹⁴ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 61.

power to placate their giddy public, to the point of paralyzed, 'heavy' exhaustion. Paré's language focuses on the body parts of the 'tongue' and 'mouths' that signify political fame; Shakespeare's 'monster' that introduces 2 *Henry IV* therefore may be influenced by criminal cranks' manipulations of their tongues. Bryan Reynolds's assertion that the Globe theatre was 'structured as a vocal tract', with its 'wind instruments' as 'lungs', and its 'stage' as 'mouth' or 'voicebox' ironically emphasizes the play's performance of apoplexy's unruly, seized vocal apparatus and its eventual silence.⁹⁵ While Reynolds does not integrate the tongue itself into this construct, we may imagine that, in this analogy, what gives the voicebox its mobility and articulation is the performer. A loss of mental and mobile abilities threatens more than the state: it threatens early modern performative modes of discourse and meaning, revealing its status as a 'paper crown'.

Falstaff's boast, 'I will turn diseases to commodity' (1.2.248), as well as Mistress Quickly's exclamation, 'feel masters, how I shake, look you' (2.4.105), demonstrates the extent to which the thieving vagabond band of Eastcheap continually appropriates and threatens their rulers' own performances. Falstaff's ability to commodify and perform this disability entrenches his role in the *Henriad* as foil for Henry IV: his vocal complaints of suffering and age anticipate his real offstage death in *Henry V*, yet also 'counterfeit' Henry IV's own apoplexy. His unofficial companionship to the official heir apparent in Shakespeare's works illustrates a political hierarchy that necessitated performance in rule and misrule alike, one in which carnival clowns underwent a travestied mimesis of kings and rulers copied the stratagems of vagabond quacks. Political metatheatre, which could include feigning, dissimulation, and cunning in the Machiavellian sense, therefore supports power but could also ultimately undermine it, as any performance relies upon the tacit agreement and engagement of its audience. In Henry IV's falling sickness and Northumberland's more 'crafty sick', the king and noble rebel are placed upon a similar footing as the falsely epileptic 'counterfeit cranke' and his spectators. As Henry IV claims after his son takes up his crown, 'now a time is come to mock at form' (4.5.118), an accusation that Henry V will subvert the king's ceremonial duties, as well as a more literal accusation that he has disrespected the physical body of his father. Yet, this prophecy of Henry V's reign is not necessarily inaccurate: Henry V will later call ceremony an empty representational 'idol' (*Henry V*, 4.1.240).

Henry V's famous discourse on 'idle ceremony' both reminds us of Henry IV's giddy sleeplessness and condemns giddy, active ceremony for its inability to cure disease. The internal contradictions of Bolingbroke's theatrical monarchy foreshadow the history

⁹⁵ Reynolds, p. 134.

cycle's continuing crises of succession: Henry V's brilliant rhetoric at the battle of Agincourt nevertheless fails to establish a successful, permanent claim on France: 'Thinks thou the fiery fever will go out / With titles blown from adulation?' (4.1.253-4); 'Canst thou, when command'st the beggar's knee, / Command the health of it?' (4.1.255-6). State ceremony itself, then, is revealed in the history cycle's performance as a reflexive, shadowy emulation of power performed by actors' 'shades'.

As Henry IV advises his son, 'Be it thy course to busy giddy minds / With foreign quarrels' (4.5.213-14). In Shakespeare's histories, war is both a physic for a nation-state's apoplexed condition of peace and a distracting performance, a mountebanking 'show' of a king's 'action' (214), or virile, unapoplexed motion – a metaphor that is unconsciously borne out even in our own contemporary diction of a 'theater' or 'arena' of war. This metaphor was very much alive during Shakespeare's time, as Nick de Somogyi charts. In *Shakespeare's Theatre of War*, De Somogyi cites parallels between military pamphlets' 'tactics of dissimulation' and theatrical practices.⁹⁶ London's playhouses were even located near where London's citizens practiced their musters⁹⁷: 'the art of war was very much an art of feigning'.⁹⁸ Warfare, in this scene, becomes both a political tactic and a necessary performance piece.

Though 'giddy' today, and generally in Shakespeare's works, carries the implication of silly or dizzy, this connotation of figurative mental dizziness has its roots in the literal mental confusion that is associated with the falling sicknesses of apoplexy, epilepsy and vertigo. Plutarch's *Lives*, a classical source for early modern literary and medical scholars alike, anticipates both meanings. Plutarch depicts Caesar's epileptic symptoms as becoming 'giddy', going 'into convulsions', and 'quite losing' his 'reason'.⁹⁹ Plutarch later asserts that those who are 'guided by the inclinations of an ignorant and giddy multitude, must needs bring all things to confusion'.¹⁰⁰ While the cultural

⁹⁶ Nick De Somogyi, *Shakespeare's Theatre of War* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 9.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 93.

⁹⁹ Plutarch, *The Fourth Volume of Plutarch's Lives, Translated from the Greek* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1693), p. 470.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 661. Despite his debility, Plutarch's Caesar is in actuality capable of performing his epileptic symptoms for political gain: 'Another time, when the Senate had conferr'd on him some extravagant Honours, he chanc'd to receive the Message as he was sitting on the Rostra, where, though the Consuls and Praetors themselves waited on him, attended by the whole Body of the Senate, he did not rise, but behav'd himself to them as if they had been private Men, and told them, His Honours wanted rather to be retrench'd, than increas'd. This Carriage of his offended not only the Senate, but Commonalty too; for they thought the affront upon the Senate equally reflected upon the whole Republick; so that all who could decently leave him went off much dejected. Caesar perceiving the false step he had made, immediately retir'd home, and laying his Throat bare, told his Friends, That he was ready to stand fair for any man that would do him the kind Office: Afterwards he excus'd his sitting by his Distemper, under pretence that those who are affected with it have their senses discompos'd' (p. 470). Of course, a reading of Henry IV's apoplexy as Caesarean 'pretense' would complicate my reading of this text further. Indeed,

attributes of giddiness and apoplexy – phlegmatic, mental and bodily weakness, feminine passivity and hysteria – on the part of the king’s subjects serve to further social cohesion, true apoplexy in a king threatens his hold over public communication. Henry IV laments, ‘More would I, but my lungs are wasted so / That strength of speech is utterly denied me’ (4.5.216-17). Like the immobility of his tongue, the debility of Henry IV’s lungs demonstrates the centrality of performative rhetoric to early modern kingship. His hold on state power is revealed, again, as equivalent to an actor’s ability to project his lines.

The literal giddiness of the head of state is at the same time inextricable from the giddiness of his members in early modern discourse. The Henrys’ burden of self-promotion in Shakespeare’s history plays is in many ways analogous to actors who must placate a restless audience, or, more specifically, the actor who must supplicate himself, controlling his joints, for attention and applause in a performance’s introduction and ending. The speaker theorizes the audience/performer relationship to be that of ‘creditor’ (Epilogue 12) and ‘debtor’ (15) as he ‘kneel[s] down before’ (16) us. The language of the epilogue thus inverts the power structure visualized by Henry V’s coronation scene and repudiation of Falstaff in Act 5.

Thus, the final words of the play hint at events of the history plays to come, which continue the cycle of social resolution and dissolution that the king’s sickness or health allegorizes. This performer repeats the play’s tropes of sense and motion as means of social control and signifiers of a healthy body politic, as he uses his ‘tongue’ to ‘entreat’ us ‘to acquit’ him (18) and his legs to ‘dance out of’ our ‘debt’ if we ‘command’ him to ‘use’ them (19). *Henry IV*/Henry IV’s supposedly manipulated, ‘giddy’ audience here holds the reins of power over the actors’ political theatre. This inversion extends beyond the carnivalesque and comic display of a Renaissance play’s final ‘jig’ when the body’s lower parts begin to stamp and fret onstage. The spectacle of an apoplexed king who is beholden to his public, entreating its attentions and borrowing its resources via taxation for wars, is omnipresent in *2 Henry IV*. In a structural echo of Henry IV’s decline through this play, first in his power of rhetoric and control of discourse in Act 1, and later in his literal, physical motion, the epilogue’s speaker declares, ‘My tongue is weary, when my legs are too, I will bid you good night’ (33-4). The comic motion of the play’s final jig reveals a powerful sense of performative disintegration at the finale of *2 Henry IV*: a giddy frenzy of the theatre as the control over the actors, or tongues, is lost, an apoplectic interregnum or pause between plays, and a transference of discursive power from actor to audience as the hierarchies of the performance dissolve.

Caesar’s manipulative feigning of weakness seems akin to Henry V’s cunning self-representation as a naïve youth in *1 Henry V* and as a military underdog in *Henry V*.