PLAGUED SUBJECTS: POLITICAL CULTURE OF CRISIS IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores the intersection of plague and political culture as theorized within the literary imagination surrounding the three major plague outbreaks of 1593, 1603, and 1625, this is a period that loosely coincides with Shakespeare's professional career (taking the first folio publication as a posthumous collaboration and the end of that career). In the early modern period, the plague marked both a threat to English political and social order, a moment of freedom as authorities retreated from the city and otherwise kept their distance from sites of infection, but also a moment when the English regimes of the period ambitiously attempted to mobilize an invasive, robust, and draconian inspection and containment policy. Within the literary texts of the period actual bubonic plague appears infrequently and "plague" is generally used figuratively. To understand the figurative "plagues" found within the literature of the period it is important to remember that the plague was an invisible, unknown object, not a microbe called yersina pestis. The disease as understood in the period was many things and it was ultimately, in its greatest expression, one deadly many-headed conceptual object erupting from the y. pestis bacterium. This plague-assemblage might have been imagined to be a disordered condition, a disordered person, tyrannical sovereignty, a lesser disease, a threat or curse, or the parts of the plague orders meant to confront the disease. The polysemic "plague" could be the plague or some other potential symptom of impending plague

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"Epidemics by their very nature demand political responses and provide a good opportunity and rationale for intervention into the lives of others, for the re-ordering of bodies."

Margaret Healy Fictions of Disease

"Inspire us therefore how to tell
The Horror of a plague, the hell
...
O dearest! Say, how can we choose
But have a sad and drooping muse
When corpses do so choke thy way
That now thou loke'st like Golgotha"

Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, "Newes from Graves ende"

"I have never seen a health event threaten the very survival of societies and governments in already very poor countries, ... I have never seen an infectious disease contribute so strongly to potential state failure."

World Health Organization head Margaret Chan

SECTION I: Introduction

By examining the political practices within Elizabethan plague laws that were enacted to manage the "deluge," Plague can be seen to infect the disordered early modern world. The "plague" operates as an epithet but does so within the multi-valence of its many meanings and historical connotations. Chapter Four's second epigraph, *"[t]he Camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule,"* represents the conceptual opening Agamben's analysis of extremity that overcomes its boundaries. As Thomas Lamke notes, for Agamben the camps were a formative moment for modern politics (Agamben, Homo Sacer168-9, emphasis in original; Lemke 53-9).[1] In the first two chapters of this dissertation, my aim is to

[1] Likewise, Foucault's biopolitics is rooted in the prominence of medicine within the logic and practices of Nazi governance (Foucault, "Society" 254-6; "Sexuality" 125; Lemke 41). Indeed, as Esposito observes, the participation of medical doctors was a foundational element of National Socialist state policies from those that focused on fighting "cancer, restricting asbestos, tobacco, pesticides, and colorants, [and] encouraging the diffusion of organic

begin with the presence of plague's political extremity within the micro-politics of Falstaff and Hal's relationship or the disordered household of *The Alchemist*.[2] Then project these micro-politics upon the macro-politics represented by Romeo and Juliet's attempted escape from the rigid authority of their fathers and misgoverned Plague-afflicted Verona and Timon's "rebellious" plaguing project. Finally, I take up the question of plague and the sovereign, not the practices of sovereignty during a Plague outbreak, but the influence of Plague upon the notions of sovereignty. For most of this project my focus is the plague-subject, but for my final chapter it is the plague-sovereign.

The plague experience haunts *both* the norm *as well as* sites of political extremity, in particular sites of colonial conquest—this is supported by the early modern connection of plague and war. Plague brings mass death and a period of often intense disorder. Above all else, this is the legacy and lasting image of the outbreak.[3] Epidemic disease outbreaks foment social and political disorder, but they are only one of many destructive or deadly catastrophes that lead to disorder. While, in Camus war and plague are grafted together by creative analogy, disorder has many faces and war and plague are only two of them: unruly masses, economic collapse, famine, flood, earthquake, and other natural disasters all carry with them the threat of political disorder. Catastrophes sufficient to disrupt the regular course of life become metonymical of the disorder

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vegetables and vegetarian cuisine" to, of course, the final solution policy. Medical doctors were the well-rewarded priests of the Reich's biopolitical health program (113-5). I will develop both this medical focused biopolitical aspects of Foucault and Esposito in subsequent chapters, for now, what is of interest is these three philosophers' mobilization of extremity to understand the norm. Of course, this technique is a favorite of Carl Schmitt's as well, the famous friend and enemy distinction of the outside that creates the inside that is for him the core of the political (Schwab "Introduction," 7). Indeed, Hobbes notions of the dangerous man that all men are, is likewise a configuration of extremity in the possibility for the absence of all law, to justify the presence of law in everyday life.

[2] This term is the simple micro-politics of the small or local as opposed to the macro-political of nationwide tax law for example. I do not mean to deploy here micropolitics of *A Thousand Plateaus* that considers scale of the components rather than the scale of the interaction.

[3] It is as true of the struggle to maintain order in West Africa during the 2013 Ebola outbreak as it is within the fictional disaster of Albert Camus' *La Peste*, or within the Daniel Defoe's dramatization of London in *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Thomas Dekker's own record, *The Wonderfull Yeare*, of the 1603 outbreak, or even the zombie outbreak, as in Max Brooks' *World War Z*.

they cause. Hurricanes like Katrina or Sandy are events that begin out over the ocean, that are named and categorized as they form. They move towards land, make landfall, impact, and dissipate in a matter of days. However, the disorder they cause metonymously continues to be known as part of the hurricane for weeks and even years later—occasionally commentators will qualify this as a distinct "aftermath" period or effect. Essentially the meaning of that disaster changes as the political and social disorder that begins with the disaster event eclipses that event. Ebola or Katrina lose meaning as simple disease outbreak or devastating hurricane, and become as much or more about the human response to those disasters.

Indeed, these two events, the political and social disorder and the natural disaster, are not *necessarily* connected. During Katrina the news was rife with rumors of all types of chaos (gang rapes, widespread looting, suicides, murders, etc.) Brian Williams—now infamously—personified the atmosphere as he embellished his reporting with unrestrained criminals and uncollected corpses. Sandy on the other hand was generally lacking such disorder.[4] It is hard to ignore the fact that one event occurred in the lower tax bracket deep south, with the worst exaggerations being made about largely African American New Orleans and the other in the more affluent white eastern seaboard. Indeed, much of the difference between the two events, aside from the relative power of the category three Katrina and the weaker post-tropical cyclone Sandy, is the preparedness of each area and the subsequent ability of each area to repair the damage. Poor New Orleans still struggles with the aftermath of the storm a decade later irrevocably changed by Katrina. Meanwhile New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut three years later are hardly affected by any aftermath. These two disasters and accompanying disorder on the

[4] We now know that much of the reported disorder in Katrina was false, not there were not significant and tragic moments of disorder during this disaster, but that much of the reporting was trumped up; although, tragically the brutal response to those fictions by police was all too real.

one hand and the relative lack of disorder on the other are clearly the result of factors other than just the size of each storm. Socio-economic and political realties that have nothing to do with the particular natural disaster determine the ability to cope with disruption and rebuild after the storm, *and* certain prejudices color the expectations of how each area are perceived to cope with disaster and restrain disorder. The implicit notion is that uneducated, southern, poor, and black in the case of New Orleans must descend into barbarity while relatively rich, east coast, and educated whites could be expected to maintain the normal order. Likewise, the disorder that accompanied plague had less to do with the nature of the outbreak and more to do with socio-economic and political factors unrelated to the disease. Responses to that disorder, to some degree, also seem to have little to do with the nature of the disease, and more to do with political practices that are independent of plague. When the concept appears in fiction it comes freighted with these connotations, which are much broader than merely the infectious affects of *y. pestis*. "Plague" means a whole host of causes, real and imagined, and effects, also real and imagined.

The word "plague" appears frequently in early modern English literature, but only infrequently was it used to denote the bubonic plague. Instead, when "plague" directly invoked disease or sickness at all, it was to indicate another lesser disease. Generally, "plague" was used as a figure of speech indicating human action ("brat, I'll plague ye" the future Richard III promises Prince Edward at the end of *Henry VI* part III), as a sort of circumstance or condition ("the plague of great ones," which Othello laments), or more rarely, to describe a person who is imagined to be like a plague, (as when Queen Margaret comments to Richard III, "thou wast born to be a plague to men"). This dissertation aims to consider the political implications of these usages of "plague" within the literature. By understanding how political practices (governance, obedience, coercion, collaboration, authority, legitimacy, law, and order) were plagued during

the thirty-two year period (1593-1625), this project aims to situate early modern popular political imagination found in literature within a diseased environment and ongoing ecological crisis (Gottfried 33). In this period, plague epidemics erupted three times (twice in years when a new monarch ascended the throne, 1603, 1625), and in general the disease was considered to be ever-threatening as it simmered throughout the years leading up to 1593 and 1625, and in the decade after 1603. As Rebecca Totaro observes, "the bubonic plague threatened the security of each reign and of each royal linage. Like a Shakespearean Richard III, waiting for a time of prosperity to seize the crown and initiate a reign of terror, the plague haunted the English throne" (2). The disease's direct impact on politics can be clearly seen in the rigid plague orders that the state produced and circulated during outbreaks, and in the simultaneous disruption of order that generally occurred during a plague outbreak.

The first book explicitly on Shakespeare and the plague, Frank Wilson's 1927 *The Plague in Shakespeare's London* (reprinted in 1963 and 1999), establishes the historicist roots of literary scholars' efforts to confront the "plague." All studies of the plague in early modern literature since have been significantly archival and historicist, and in particular plague scholarship always must be aware of the medieval history of the disease. However, so thorough was Wilson's review of the plague's textual archive and of the moments of significant "plague" appearances within the literary cannon that his work remained the only significant effort to understand the enigma of the plague in the literature of Shakespeare's lifetime for more than sixty years. In the years between Wilson's book and Leeds Barroll's influential 1991 *Politics, Plague, And Shakespeare's Theater: The Stuart Years* literary scholarship did as David Steel did in 1981: begin with some fourteenth century text, like Boccaccio's *The Decameron* or Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*, then jump more than 300 years to 1665 and a reading of Daniel Defoe's 1722 *A*

Journal of the Plague Year (91).[5] In 1991, Leeds Barroll began what has become over the decades since a general reexamination and deeper exploration of plague and disease in early modern English literature. In particular, Barroll explores the politics of the London civic leaders' relationship with the theater and how the plague became a part of the politics of that relationship; recently Ellen McKay's chapter on plague in *Persecution, Plague, and Fire* (2011) has deftly followed up on Barroll's effort to invest the theater with its plague history. In contrast to the politics of Barroll's book (and MacKay's chapter), my project more broadly examines the politics of the plague experience in the lives of the common sort within early modern literature; although I remain largely centered on the London plague experience as well.

An important source of insight, Jonathan Gill Harris' chapter, "'Ev'ry pison good for some use': the poisonous political pharmacy and its discontents," (from the 1998 *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic*), furthers Barroll's example of the city fathers' use of the plague. However, it does so by explicitly exploring how the early modern pathology of real disease is thought through the body metaphor for the whole society, and how the presence of disease informs authority within early modern English society. This last concern for authority's relationship to disease provides an important starting point for my project, which further invests authority within a specifically plagued history.

Extending Harris' observation, Margaret Healy's 2001 *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politics* in part takes the opposite trajectory of my project by pluralizing "plague" into the many diseases of the period, rather than pluralizing the plague itself into its many metaphors as I have set out to do. Though focused on the body, Healy's work runs parallel to my project and thus has several points of intersection—primarily when she

[5] A notable scholarly exception to this is Rene Girard's treatment of the plague in *To Double Business Bound*.

investigates the early modern political and social body. In *Sick Economies* (2004) Harris follows up his work by focusing in English economic culture and also explores the broad import of disease beyond the medical field within the early modern period. In particular, he connects the infectious plague to the motion of trade across the early modern world. Harris shows how the plague's language "infected" the debates over foreign trade and how trade concerns could affect plague regulations, thus exposing how policy and disease became intertwined. Similarly, I seek to show how plague language infected political practice and debate as produced within early modern literature.

The same year as Harris' book, Bryon Lee Grigsby important study of plague, *Pestilence in Medieval and early modern English Literature* (2004), treats the late middle and early modern plague as one continuous event. His exploration of plague as a metaphor through the lens of medical interpretation, lays the foundation for my understanding of the plague as metaphor mobilized medically, theologically, economically, and politically. Rebecca Totaro is probably the most prolific literary scholar on the subject of plague (certainly of the past decade), her *Suffering in Paradise: The Bubonic Plague in English Literature from More to Milton* (2005) explores the plague as a metaphoric presence within "utopian literature." Her chapters on *Timon of Athens* and *The Alchemist* offer a reading of the plague within the plays that is decidedly political, and informs my own reading of these plays. However, where her exploration is governed first by biographical concerns and focused upon understanding the personal, emotional, psychological effects of the plague, my project is focused upon the political effects broadly and thus my readings of these plays is significantly different. However, it is her assertion that while the plague was one of many diseases, it was of singular significance and influence within the period that is perhaps the most significant aspect of her book for my project.

Finally, Gilman's *Plague Writing in Early Modern England* (2009) is another study that parallels this dissertation, but rather than the political plague his book explores the theodicy of the plague through the psychoanalytic lens of trauma theory, which, along side, Harris, Grigsby, and Totaro's work, provides another way of understanding the plague as metaphor. Finally, Richelle Munkhoff's essay, "Contagious Figurations: Plague and Impenetrable Nation after the Death of Elizabeth," in Totaro and Gilman's edited collection, *Representing the Plague in Early Modern England* (2011), of course informs my interest in the plague as a threatening outside political force.

SECTION II: Plagued History

It has become well accepted that the "Black Death" of the late 1340s along with subsequent plague outbreaks were singularly transformative of the medieval period, and certainly since Paul Slack's masterful *The Impact of the Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (1985), scholars have begun to appreciate the plague's continued importance throughout the early modern period. The disease persisted as a clear and present danger, always potentially there, lurking just off stage until at least the end of the seventeenth century.[6] In response to a threat that was understood as both divine and mundane, early moderns mitigated their danger through piety,

[6] Fifty-eight years after Frank Wilson's investigation into the topic of the early modern English plague world was revitalized by historian Paul Slack's robust and in depth 1985 study. Between these two books historians continued the investigation of the Black Death and fourteenth century plague begun by Cardinal Gasquet in 1893 (Ziegler 1). Even though it was not a major focus of historians, by 1963 J. M. W. Bean could still say with some accuracy that the topic had "already received considerable attention" (423) as he directed his attention to the later middle ages. But it was not until "amateur" historian Philip Ziegler tackled the subject in his landmark, *The Black Death* (1969) and social historian, Robert S. Gottfried, followed up fourteen years later with *The Black Death: Natural and Human Disaster in Medieval Europe*, that a truly sustained investigation of the subject had been undertaken outside of the history of medicine. Slack's book remains *the* touchstone for early modern plague scholars, and perhaps its greatest contribution is that it follows Gottfried and invests the plague with a social history. By explicitly considering the disease's effect upon society Slack establishes that the plague was a significant force shaping early modern England. Subsequent historiography has examined the plague within specific contexts within the late middle ages (Ireland, London, the Middle East, etc.). However, it is literary scholars that have continued Slack's efforts to understand the *early modern* plague experience.

emotional/humoral balance, diet, and exercise; they exposed themselves to poisons in an effort to inoculate or produce immunity from the plague's poison, or they fled from infected places where miasma or Paracelsus' microcosmic poisons of disease threatened (Totaro 16-18). The result of sometimes competing understandings of the world, the one thing these strategies had in common was that none could provide a guarantee of survival against this most lethal of diseases. In his 1603 poem "London's Mourning Garment," pamphleteer William Muggins offers death from the disease as the only true "physik."[7] While other things and diseases might also be called plagues,[8] there is a deadly singularity to the bubonic plague. When the definite article preceded certain key words and no "of …" modifier followed,[9] bubonic plague was almost always what was being invoked. The plague was "The Sickness," "The Pestilence," "The Distemper," "The Great Mortality," and "The Plague of Plagues." In many descriptions the plague is broken into constitutive parts: death and plague for Thomas Dekker; death, plague, and pestilence (where pestilence seems to be the social disorder that accompanies a plague visitation) for Muggins. For others of the period these terms are all interchangeable.

Politically, the plague marks the moment of challenge and often of failure for the early modern English state. As pamphleteer John Davis notes in 1603, it is hard to "say the king doth raign / That no where, for just fear, can abide" (303-4). That is, during a plague outbreak, when he is unable to be secure in any location, the sovereign can no longer be the sovereign.[10] It was

[7] The only cure or treatment for plague was death as an end to sin.
[8] Thomas Dekker's *The Raven's Almanacke*" names twelve "plagues, all of which are situations (being a cuckold is one, and of course suggestive of syphilis), the "blacke plague" is a man with no money, "God's plague is the last and most heavey": a good man with health who keeps company with the devil; only this last is suggestive of the bubonic plague experience.
[9] For example, "the plague of custom" Edmund from *Lear* resists (1.2.3), or "the plague of great ones" that Othello turns into the "forkèd plague" of cuckold horns (3.3.277-80).
[10] Another reading of these two lines is that the king cannot reign if no one is afraid to disobey his orders. This is a contradiction to the notion that I will put forward in my reading of Nashe's *Unfortunate Travler* in chapter one, that the state should not match the plague's terror. If we follow this notion that no one fears the king when the plague's

the moment in which the state simultaneously sought to orchestrate its greatest efforts to control the population and confronted its profound inability to produce the apparatus of that control effectively. The plague was a tempestuous source of disorder to which the state had to learn how to respond, and in some measure, as I shall argue below, a phenomenon the state learned to imitate. However, the *politics* of plague cannot be fully understood in isolation from other conceptual frameworks attempting to account for and confront the disease, such as the theological and medical; although not the focus of this project, as they have been for other explorations of disease within the period, theology and medicine obviously are important parts of humanity's understanding of the plague.[11]

Theologically the plague was a rough chastisement against corrupting impiety; this is both a simple framework and one that, as Ernest Gilman describes, contains the complex, traumatic, *and* even psychotic reconciliation of a divinely directed pestilence sent by a beneficent God. While it would be reckless to underestimate the significance of this theological reconciliation of the disease, some early moderns clearly rejected the divine threat and its implied heavenly reward as they behaved with greater impiety during outbreaks.[12] Despite the example of such sinners' contrary behavior, the plague was first and fundamentally understood as a divine rod of punishment sent to brutally compel piety. This was the greater order that the disease was supposed to uphold; all else, death, suffering, and disorder, were secondary to that goal.[13]

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fear overshadows it, then perhaps the king should rival the disease's terror. But, this is a contradiction more fully addressed in chapter two and chapter four.

[11] I hesitate to say "scientific" since this denotes a specific sort of knowledge and type of thinking today that was only just emerging towards the end of the period this project is focused on.

[12] As Thomas Middleton shows in a bad and cautionary light in his *Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinarie* (1604).

[13] There is a thanatopolotics within this understanding of the disease, plague was a divine attempt to create a better order through mass death.

Medically, the plague's presence provoked greater attention to proper humoral balance and body maintenance. Beginning as early as John Lydgate's fifteenth century "A Dietary, and Doctrine for Pestilence," and carried through to Thomas Dekker's 1630 "London Looke Backe," people imagined the plague as both God's divine wrath *and* as an infectious disease. Both of these conceptual logics called for a measure of self governance that had implications for general health and the political control realm. It was expected that since the plague was a punishment for wickedness (both societal and personal), every individual should do their best to avoid wickedness. On the other hand, responding to the plague as infectious, one could govern one's body through efforts to balance the bodily humors without regard for piety.[14] This governance extended into the mind as well, with readers of plague-literature admonished to avoid emotional excess as they were also directed to be pious and resist the temptations of sin (Bullein 87; Elizabeth 188-9). Readers of Francis Hering's *Certaine Rvles Directions* were directed to avoid certain gatherings places, such as butcher's markets, theaters, alehouses, drainage canals, swamps, etc. to avoid sickness. These admonitions could of course also take on religious components, as was the case of theaters and alehouses—both sites containing the taint of licentious sin and general impiety, beyond their threat as sites of contagion. In the free-form pursuit of health the quest for humoral balance and piety might be intertwined. Some of these prescriptions or "restrictions" were called for informally in pamphlets and through "common" plague wisdom. Some restrictions were codified by the state (both national and local), as it shut down markets, closed theaters, moralized against alehouses (as Middleton shows in *The*

[14] This was done by limiting or increasing certain activities, eating certain foods, drinking certain beverages, or performing other such humor balancing activities that had little or no regard for piety as for instance in Elizabethan Plague Orders or William Jones 1603 and 1625, *Certain Rules, Directions, or Advertisments for this Time of Pestilentiall Contagion. With A caveat to those that weare about their neckes impoisoned Amulets as a Preservation from the Plague*.

Meeting)—even as the plague drove many to them—and closed communities off from each other (Barroll 74-5; Slack 257; Gilman 131, 42). The plagued political culture was enmeshed within the web of meanings formed by the various 'extra-political' perceptual and practical efforts to cope with the disease.

Within these prescriptions was the plague's governance, formed by early moderns' desperate efforts to remain healthy and survive, which disrupted the traditional social order and governing practices. A plague visitation "spelled havoc for normal patterns of [economic] behavior," it cleared the streets, and it drove people to defy law and escape from the prisons their houses might have become because of the policy of quarantine (Slack 188-9, 278-9). It drove monarchs to flee before it as fear of the disease sent them wandering about their kingdom in search of safety (Totaro 2). The plague was an ecological crisis that threatened international commerce (Harris "Sick Economoies" 128-31) and created a general panic wherever and whenever it appeared (Wilson 18). That the seemingly antithetical divine and humoral (pagan-based) plague frameworks were generally deployed side by side not only shows the general panic and desperation of those confronting this inscrutable threat, but also demonstrates a profound flexibility of thinking about the disease. These theories of the plague are important aspects of the early modern plague experience, as they represent the fictionalization of a disease by people with few real weapons to battle what was perhaps humanity's greatest foe. They could not inoculate against it, they could not quarantine it (though of course they tried), and all other cures and prophylactic efforts failed to some degree. Therefore, they turned to the only reliable method of control they possessed: their imaginations. This was a uniquely unscientific and unordered pre-modern approach that readily attached a range of meanings, metaphors, and concepts to the plague that might help to govern and understand it.

Plague literature represents early modern England's attempts to come to terms with the disease that terrorized them: Thomas Dekker compares it to Tamburlaine, Christopher Marlowe's supreme conqueror, and counts the efforts of England to cope with it as inseparable from the thing itself. It was not uncommon for people to be described as "plagues" or "a plague" when their actions are not bounded by morality, law, and acting on disruptive will alone. This observation is important because it suggests a general understanding that plague might be something a person could imitate or something one should not be like—either way, the plague on some level was rather broadly "studied" as a model for human action. In *The Ravevens Almanacke* (1609) Dekker describes twelve plagues that are essentially types of social circumstance or people. Taking as an entry point this "plague" multiplicity, my project considers four aspects or characteristics present in various figurative descriptions of the plague: (1) the practices of political governance during the plague that are closely aligned with descriptions of the plague's "governance," (2) the methods of properly governing one's body and mind during an outbreak as a form personal government, (3) the plague as threatening conqueror that becomes an externally imposed tyranny,[15] and (4) plague as a weapon supporting conquest, a tool for government's imposition of authority, or (contrastingly) as tool for resistance to authority. In plague literature the disease is repeatedly connected to war and famine (as in Middleton's *Meeting*), and historically in 1580s Ireland, famine followed English military victory, and itself was followed by plague. In addition, during plague time, as Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* represents, there was a sense that the plague also created a space of freedom from the usual constraints of society.

[15] This description of the plague as a conquering force appears most conspicuously in the plague pamphlets of Thomas Dekker.

SECTION III: Chapter Outlines

My first chapter aims to first, lay out the terms of the project that follows: that plague was understood pedagogically as a corrective, that it was inherently political, and that it was concrete threat which had significant figurative existences that were potentially quite removed from the threat it posed. Then, in this chapter, I examine Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveler* to offer a examples of politically pedagogical plague. Nashe's picaresque novel is framed by disease, the English sweating sickness of the early sixteenth century, drives the hero, Jack Wilton, form England in fear, but the worse threat of the plague (the slavery of being an Englishman abroad) sends him back home to the safer confines of England with its welcoming service culture. The plague serves as a metaphor for overly rigorous government and the failure of that government: the plague is a tyrant which the state, to a certain and limited degree, mirrors as it tries to overmatch the disease's rule. Finally, in the chapter I take up what has challenged some literary scholars of plague: the nature of the disease in the early modern world. The difficulty arises form the fact that the disease itself makes relatively few appearances within the literature of the period, leading to the tendency to downplay its significance. However, I argue, this misunderstands the status of a disease within the period. While we have been admonished since the 1970s by Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*, to not make metaphors of disease, the early modern's only tool for understanding disease was *through metaphor*. Not only did they not have microscopes to see diseases with, but they did not have the concept that said there was a disease to see, let alone explain how that disease functioned.

Exploring the figurative plague is the effort of the second chapter, and the authoritarianism and the disciplinary that was the general conditions when plague orders were in

effect serves to frame that exploration.[16] This chapter begins the project's description of the state's efforts to rule, and its inability to do so effectively as the plague creates a disruption of order that early modern governors were learning to mimic as well as endeavoring to overcome. Royal Plague Orders (in particular Elizabeth's) show the formal state attempting to govern England by producing a regime of control that exposes the effort to match and learn from the plague's penetration and power.[17] *The Wonderfull Year* further dramatizes the failures of the state's plague officers, when faced with disaster, to even obey the orders they have been commanded to carry out; as for example, within the pamphlet, when a justice who had once gone to war refuses to do his duty during a plague visitation, even at the urging of a humble constable who has continued fulfill his own duty to uphold the legal order.

Chapter two develops the understanding of figurative Plague and its relationship to disorder by exploring the political condition of *1 Henry IV*. The play provides a summative and unique theory of plague governance. Falstaff offers both a resistance to state rule *and* an inversion of the state as "the lord of misrule," evaluating and judging his comrades (including Harry) through plagued language and politics. Falstaff is the greatest wielder of "plague" in all of Shakespeare, and he uses it almost exclusively as a curse against the "misrule" of his "subjects" within the gang, including Hal. For the state, the plague was an emergency demanding a response and it was a model for new forms of power through emulation, as I will argue in

[16] The disciplinary gaze as is found in, for example, the scene from Middleton's *Your Five Young Gallants* when the broker-gallant Frip is very mindful of where the pawns he's purchasing come from and refuses to do business with someone with goods from a suspicious parish: Frip "I will neither purchase the plague for six pence in the pound and a groat bill-money, nore venture my small stock into contagious parishes. You have your answer; fare-you-well, as fast as you can, sir" (1.1.40-54).

[17] For instance, Elizabethan orders of that "required justices to engage in 'unprecedentedly precise, expensive, and time consuming regulation of local affairs'" mark an attempt to meet threat that was both national and local, as magistrates meddled in affairs typically left to the purview of local people, this prompted "principled acts of defiance" against the state's unusually robust governance that was an attempt to match the plague's impact (Hindle 169, 170).

chapter four. For the subject, as depicted in literary texts, resistance could also be a sort of emulation, as I will show that it is for Nashe's villain Esdras within the harsh, plague-like Roman State. However, the subject could also resist—perhaps by way of sack—through disorder, misrule, and the irreverent mockery of all order, as Sir John does. These literary works suggest that part of the early modern English response to plague recognized that attempts to produce a new, more robust order failed, and imagined within that failure an opportunity to learn from the plague's disruption. They depict two options for subjects within a world of these contesting orders: adapt by adopting the discourse of violence perpetrated by plague and government alike or form a new separate and temporary disordered-order.[18]

Chapter Three aims to pursue this "disordered-order" and show the productive or useful metaphor of the plague: as it is corrective, it produces a collective and corrective concordance as it does at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*; as it produces disorder, that disorder is useful to those who thrive outside of law. Further, within the plague context, law and justice become, to some degree, as arbitrary as the plague's suffering and death are. Following Falstaff's example, this chapter moves from the uses of the plague by the state in the production of the unusually robust state apparatuses and harshly coercive rule during plague outbreaks, to the individual's uses of the plague. Thus, this chapter in part takes up the general desire for health that would be imagined to impel total self-governance as part of the robust governing system during plague outbreaks, *and* it considers how the absence of that desire for health in some subjects affords them a great degree of freedom of action than they normally have. The plague, in theory, united all of England in the desire for health—which instigated disciplinary forms that few efforts of governance could match; for instance, as when all who could fled in a collective mobilization

[18] There is both order and disorder in Hal and Falstaff's Cheapside society.

that an early modern governor must have watched with some envy, thinking "if only *I* could unite the people so effectively to follow *my* orders." However, this mobilization created a power vacuum that left the government with only authoritarian coercion to attempt to control those who did not flee, and few masters willing to exercise that authority. If those who did not flee did not succumb to the general fear of plague and desire for health, then there was no rule except magistrates' infrequent coercion.

The framing text of chapter three, *The Alchemist* (a text that is important as it shows the interplay of health-focused masters and the fatalistic servant underclass) shows that the plague was understood to have its uses for those seeking to resist the social order, as well as potential failure of community found within the typical plague-context. The absence of the householder Lovewit, who retreats to protect his health, creates a space in *The Alchemist* in which law, social hierarchy, and the recognizable structures of early modern society have broken down. The plague becomes productive of life outside of the established order for those who do not have the luxury of following the best prescription for plague outbreaks, running away: for example, as in John Fletcher's sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew*, Petruchio is undone by Maria's use of the collective desire for health as a tool for inverting the traditional social order.[19]

These understandings of plague as potentially corrective and/or part of the language of resistance explains the plague's presence in *Romeo and Juliet*. This play shows the plague was understood to be a corrective force within the early modern political world as it erupts from Mercutio's dying lips.[20] Plague and "plague" mark the failures of those governing Verona as

[19] At one point he seems to accept that he might be sick and remains silent. However, during the confirmation of his quarantine he is utterly ignored by everyone – it is as if he has already died – and it is their collective desire for health renders his pleas unheard.

[20] The occasional confusion that he says "A *pox* o'both your houses" rather than the correct "A *plague* o'both your houses," stems from the first bad quarto of 1597 that recorded (among other differences with later quarto and folio editions) the disease as a pox, of course comically alluding to venereal disease. However, in every subsequent

their failed quarantine policies are instrumental in producing the play's tragedy. Finally, the play turns towards the death that constitutes the inevitable end and ends of the plague. Theologically the plague was understood as an apocalyptic warning and terrible punishment from God, meant to correct impiety and purify the nation through death. If we accept that Mercutio (as the cousin to the Duke) intentionally invokes the plague, knowing that the plague was in Verona and thus declaring that the disease should correct the Capulet and Montague houses, we see that the plague was imagined to offer not just possible freedom for subjects, but also an opportunity to resist or even threaten the established social order. Further, the plague in the play shows the fallibility of human plans and governance, as the Friar's efforts to reunite the couple fail as completely as the efforts to quarantine and banish do, and indeed fail because of a plague quarantine. The end is a sort of "mass" grave of all but one the play's dead, over which the rulers of Verona vow to end their "quarantine," which has had such a disastrous effect and instead join together in death what should have been joined together in life and love.[21] In *Timon of Athens* the subject of an inequitable social order is plagued by the failure of his friends to fulfill their duty to him,[22] and, as Timon becomes the abject exile of a corrupted state (if not a direct result of its rule), plague becomes part of the language of retaliation. At his most free and at his lowest point, he attempts to mobilize the plague as corrective, wishing even that he could infect himself and send it to the senators (5.1.155). In this moment, the general concern for health is threatened by the abjected Timon's desire for revenge.

edition of the play the tragedy provoking plague is the disease of Mercutio's curse. That the notion persists testifies to the power of being first.

[21] In the final moment, Romeo rather inexplicably carries Paris's body into Juliet's tomb with him and sees Tybalt laid out nearby, only Mercutio is missing – and Romeo does mention him as Paris' "cousin" (5.3.75-97).

[22] An important part of plague literature is the upholding of one's duty – obviously because often people did not uphold their duty (Grigsby 122).

Chapter Four follows this notion of the plague as a threat, focusing on the metaphor of plague within sovereignty as a threatening conqueror from both inside and outside of the social order, but also, as a useful threatening model. The plague was the universal enemy of all, even as it was sent from God: the plague threatened the nation, city, community, family, and individual (although, of course, it brought the pious to a sort of martyrdom and salvation). This chapter reads against the grain of the previous chapter's assumption of an early modern plague governance characterized by a biopolitical and general concern for health and the practices of maintaining health[23] to understand how the plague-sovereign might be imagined as making use of the plague, which will be the focus of the second half of this project. The greatest external threat of the English imagination was, perhaps, a Tamburlaine, an Eastern warlord like the Scythian conqueror who is frequently described as a conquering plague that kills and restricts the life of his enemies[24] and is simultaneously intent upon producing his own biological future life (through family, as Zenocrates is his first conquest). However, his rule of death eventually includes part of his own family, and though he is partially a model for an ambitious England he also marks a violently threatening order of death on Europe's borders (Bartels 5).[25]

Disregarding the general concern for health and life, Richard III is *the* "homegrown" ambitious and bloody English ruler. The play shows a more domestic and deeper meditation than Nashe's novel on the failure of a thanatopolitical production of death to cultivate new life, and

[23] As is at the center of the previous chapter and a key part of how the plague was useful in *The Tamer Tamed* and *The Alchemist* (as the authority flees), and tied up in the effective correction of the plague in *Romeo and Juliet* (it is quarantine that impels the tragic plot towards destruction and ultimate correction).
[24] He does this by marrying their woman, (Zenocrates), by separating them from their women, (Bajazeth and Zabina), killing their women (the seven virgins), by having his men marrying their women (as Theridamas tries to do with Olympia), and turning their women into prostitutes (as with the Turkish Concubines) – also, of course, killing massive amounts of people also is an important part of his biological destruction.
[25] This reading of *Tamburlaine* will also be informed by perceptions of the plague as from and of the east, as Birsen Bulmus describes in his monograph *Plague, Quarantines, and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire*.

ultimately represents a production of an English royal brother[26] that directs his conquest upon his own countrymen rather than, like Henry V does, upon an external threat. Richard is the threat of what might happen should plague rule become established in England. The play offers a cautionary note against such politics directed internally, [27] as this "plague to men" who declares to his opponents "A plague upon you all!" (*Henry VI*, part III 5.5.28; *Richard III* 1.3.58) wreaks havoc upon the political order of the England. Richard is a plague-man, but unlike Nashe's Esdras (the dissertation's other great plague-man), Richard becomes the king through his brutality, although he is also ultimately undone by the consequences of it.

Unstoppable, deadly, and from the East, the plague was incorporated into the imagined military and thus political threat of the Near East that England was anxious to understand and imitate (Bartels). However, the deadly, plague-like and thanatopolitical philosophy found in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* contains a warning against the dangers of political infighting as royal brothers Mycetes and Cosroe disastrously divide Persian power, ultimately giving Tamburlaine the opening he needs to seize the crown. The state must be united; domestic political conflicts are not an arena for open war. Thus, the English Imperial dream was darkened by the nightmarish consequences of Richard III's deadly plague-like rise to power,[28] and *Richard III* and *Henry V* are meditations on the failed and successful uses of a death focused politics. Richard is the homegrown failure to properly restrain the death in service of conquest—in this case, the conquest is the English crown.

[26] Like Mycetes and Cosroe in *Tamburlaine* or the political infighting of Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks*
[27] A distinction set aside for now that may have to be explored in the dissertation.
[28] As noted in above, this linkage of Richard to the plague or as a plague, begins at the end of *Henry VI*, part III and continues in *Richard III*.

CHAPTER ONE
"What plague canst thou name…?": Figuring the Plague in Early Modern Literature

> *"The boundary between [disease] and the 'normal genome' is quite blurred; intrinsic to our own ancestry and nature are not only Adam and Eve, but any number of invisible germs that have crept into our chromosomes"*
>
> Joshua Lederberg, "Pandemic as a Natural Evolutionary Phenomenon."

> *"What plague canst thou name worse than I have had? Whether diseases," or man-made plagues of "imprisonment, poverty, banishment, I have passed through them all"*
>
> Nashe *Unfortunately Traveler*

> *"plague to hang upon yeu, that the pest cart of Newgate will carrie your bodies away in heapes"*
>
> Dekker*, Raven's Almanacke*

> *"There is no health; physicians say that we /At best, enjoy but a neutrality"*
>
> John Donne "An Anatomy of the World"

SECTION I: Introduction to Early Modern Literature's Plagued Politics

As Noble Prize winner Joshua Lederberg notes, talking about the amalgamation of genes from different sources, like diseases, that come to makeup DNA as it evolves:

> Our own genome probably carries hundreds of thousands of such stowaways. The boundary between [disease] and the 'normal genome' is quite blurred; intrinsic to our own ancestry and nature are not only Adam and Eve, but any number of invisible germs that have crept into our chromosomes. (27-8)

The story of how those thousands of bits of disease DNA joined with our genome blurring the lines between human and disease is lost in the hundreds of thousands of years long micro-biological history of humanity's struggle with disease. This dissertation is the exploration of a handful of decades when the remarkable literature of those decades occasionally imagined how Plague might join our political DNA. To begin I will outline

the overarching concerns of the project and its theoretical concerns, then examine Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveler,* which provides examples of the core elements of each of the subsequent readings of this project. Then I will turn to the problem of the relationship between the figurative "plague" and 'actual' Bubonic Plague.[29]

Part I: Three Guiding Conceits of the Project

The three conceits of this project will both guide overarching argument of the project that each subsequent section will seek to prove. The first conceit is that although plague's effects were well known, the disease was always an unknowable object in its causes and thus in its treatments, and therefore the significance of the plague's death must also be fictional. This is because the object itself or the sorts of scientific theory (as we would think of them) to account for the disease were entirely outside of the capacities of early modern medical practitioners. Instead of an object about which something could be known—*y. pestis*—early moderns instead had theological, medical (in various not mutually exclusive forms of humoral, miasmic, and Paracelsian theories), social, and political narratives to explain the function of the disease, all of which emerged as interpretations of the disease's workings and effects. Thus, the bulk of what was written about the plague is in some way metaphoric.[30] The disease's imagined causes, while material, were related to the plague in purely figurative terms that were at best synecdochal, although most frequently metonymic or allegoric, and always anything but scientific in the

[29] The "plague" will be used to indicate entirely figurative plagues, and the unquoted and capitalized Plague to indicate the early modern English concept of disease springing from *y. pestis*. At points when the word is not distinguished, I am drawing attention to the ambiguous nature of the word that is between the figurative and "real" concepts.

[30] Even its manifestations on the body, buboes for instance, that appear in contemporary descriptions of the disease are actually swollen lymph nodes and thus are only metonymically related to the bacteria and are not the disease itself.

modern sense that systematic, controlled observations or experiments would lead to a reasoned understanding of the phenomenon. Since the singular (bubonic) plague could not be known as the literal bacteria *yersinia pestis* in the early modern period, in place of the microbe was a figurative-object that took on wholly alien forms of "life" as many things became a "plague" and the "plague" became many things.

The second conceit of this project is that the plague was politically significant beyond its immediate contexts. The disease served as a challenge to be met and learned from, and also as a power to be emulated. From our perspective, the plague directly manifested the supreme challenge to early modern governors' ability to rule. Plague became a political force as it disrupted the state's political organization—it was the repeated demonstration of a non-human power beyond human political power. At the center of this other power was death, all in service of a greater (divinely ordained) order. Plague challenged both theology and medicine (humoral and other emerging medical theories), and each responded by adapting and conforming to the plague—it served a shaping function in these contexts. Likewise, the disease challenged the state's ability to maintain order and control its subjects, and governors responded by adapting and conforming to, and even imitating, I will argue, the disciplinary regime of the disease.

To explore that plagued political understanding, this dissertation employs a methodology that takes all action, writing, and speech *as* culture. Thus, in this dissertation plagued-political culture is not "represented"; rather it is manifested within texts, which participate in and contribute to its formation. With due caution, I privilege the literary text as the central object through which the plagued-political subject is to be studied. This is not to say that pamphlets, ordinances, and other archival texts are not a part of this political culture or are necessarily less than important. Indeed, these texts offer to broaden the plague context, exposing both the state's

efforts to control the nation, and the individual's various grasping efforts to "cure" and/or manage the threat. Further, these documents, by illuminating the various theories of the plague and its meanings, provide the historical "plague" that literary texts mobilize, and thus are the first point of reference for this project. But these texts were limited in both their scope and their particularity by their rhetorical situation and circumstance of publication. Therefore, these texts contribute to political culture in less dynamic and vibrant ways than can be found in the literary text. While literary texts faced certain mediations to be sure, the literary text's unique nature (as art) and position (as popular) within the period and beyond make it the most fertile site for discovering the plagued politics that was emerging within the period.

In producing that politics, the literary both theorizes and particularizes a plagued-political culture, which contains emerging "structures of a feeling"—a concept framed by Raymond Williams to signify an "embryonic phase" from which develop the more "formal concepts of 'world-view' or 'ideology'" (132). The early modern plague experience saw the production of a more robust governing apparatus, and a general interest in public health and individual health by all members of society from the monarch to the beggar. This interest produced an unusual alertness to possible sickness or health that was tied to demographic information (i.e. where someone was from and what job they did). The structures of feeling that were emerging from this plague experience influence the development of contemporary political theories. These are identified by Michel Foucault in his concepts of disciplinary power and governmentality (*Discipline and Punish* and the lectures on *Security, Territory, Population*, respectively) and Roberto Esposito, in his recent work on the biopolitics of immunity (*Immunitas*). These theories, which became clearly visible within the plagued world of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, serve to guide the project's analysis.

The goal of that analysis is to illuminate the ways in which plague was, to a significant extent, formative of early modern English political culture. I will demonstrate that the plague is not just a disease, but also a form of governance: a governance that impels through death, one that, according to early modern plague writers, was imagined to assimilate and join humanity's methods for controlling it to serve its own purpose. Further, the disease is likened to armies and conquerors expressing God's wrath, thereby invoking the various ways in which humans have "plagued" themselves with highly organized violence and death. At the same time, more quotidian figures become plague-like in their arbitrary violence or are understood as 'plagues' because of their ungovernable actions, values, and attitudes. To understand these metaphoric conceptions of the disease, this project traces the roots of contemporary political theory within the early modern plague world and political culture. What is exposed from this "plagued" early modern English political culture is a human governance that both resisted and emulated the plague's "governance," as it learned to combat the plague, in part by trying to *become like* the plague: to become as pervasive, penetrating, and disciplining in service of the 'general good' and the survival of the state, asserting death of the state's subjects as necessary to produce the greater good, as Gilman describes the theodicy of the plague (69-70). Rather than accepting Rebecca Totaro's insistence on a singular plague (it is one disease, not many), I accept instead that Plague was *the* Plague of plagues, in that all plagues in some way relate to the Plague, this project aims to explore the politics of plague within early modern English practices of governance—practices that will be a part of the future British Imperial rule. These unprecedentedly robust (and frequently inept) attempts to govern during plague outbreaks contained the roots of political theories that have developed over the four centuries since the formative thirty-five year span

(1593-1625) which contained two monarchical ascensions and three major plague outbreaks.[31] The project's ultimate thesis is that to understand English sovereignty and Imperial dreams through the plague is to know an England beginning to imagine itself as embodied in remorseless men of iron, and dreaming of becoming an Imperial plague upon the globe.[32]

The first of the political theories guiding this project revolves around the general tension between the authoritarian/coercive government practices and concordant/collaborative governance expectations—the former producing regulations without regard for law and tradition, and the later representing the expectation of time honored and collectively accepted law and tradition. The second political theory of this project is invested in, the disciplinary gaze, is important for understanding the condition during an outbreak when early moderns watched the quarantined houses and plague bills, became both mindful of where people were from, and on the lookout for signs of individual, neighborhood, or general wellness, piety, and dangerous behavior. Third, the plague experience was characterized by the state's production, for the first time, of a robust apparatus of institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations, and tactics, targeting something 'population-like'[33] as the object of governance. This population was

[31] In fact, in an odd coincidence each of the last two plague outbreaks (epidemic producing mass death) occurred in the same year as an ascension; that two different outbreaks occurred in years during which the monarch died and was replaced imbued the disease with the mysterious political import found in some plague writing (Thomas Dekker in particular). 1593 was the first major plague outbreak in England in thirty years and thus the first of Shakespeare and most of his peers lives. Ten years later Elizabeth's forty-five year reign came to an end. As the nervous nation came to terms with the death of the only monarch most of them had ever known plague struck again (perhaps the worst outbreak of the seventeenth century). Twenty-two years later (1625) her heir, James I, died and Charles I ascended to the throne. Once again, the plague struck in the second major visitation of the century and the second in a row that coincided with monarchical transition.

[32] This is not to imagine a teleological trajectory to the British Empire. But to instead understand this as the emergence of a set of strategies that would eventually be taken up and adapted to fit the various British colonial enterprises around the global.

[33] In the *Security, Territory, Population* lectures Foucault argues that the governing of populations is "completely different from the exercise of sovereignty over the fine grain of individual behaviors," and that these are "two completely different systems of power" (66). He then notes that during the plague the English death roles were the first mortality tables and a significant first step for identifying a population to govern: "throughout the sixteenth century, these mortality tables were only drawn up at the time of the major epidemics." The plague "made mortality so dramatic that there was an interest in knowing how many people were dying, where they died, and of what cause" (67). This is an "interest" of subjects and governors alike to preserve general health and restrain mass death.

analyzed through a governing mentality formed from early modern plague knowledges that were founded upon the universal desire for health. Fourth, the plague creates a biopolitical governance of general and individual health in the face of the plague's relentless production of death in the service of a higher, Christian order of God. The early moderns adopted this in an emerging thanatopolitical theory that privileged the concern for the "life" of the state over concern for the life or death of the subject.[34]

Finally, third, the early modern world's relationship to the plague was almost always pedagogical: there had to be a lesson: otherwise human suffering meant nothing, and humans were reduced to just another animal in a Godless universe. The plague taught in two ways: first, it was imagined (a) to directly chastise humanity for impiety and (b) to direct them towards proper piety.[35] Over and over again plague writing (sermons, pamphlets, poems, dialogues, etc.) is concerned with the plague's lesson(s) (Gilman 42, 68, 203-4). The plague's pedagogy was, however, always subject to interpretation and as such was anything but codified: for instance, one should be pious, but how exactly and to what effect varies depending upon the writer. Should one risk unbalancing the body's humors by piously fasting? Or, was the danger from impiety so great that one should go to church despite the likelihood of coming into contact with

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This exemplifies how England was learning from the plague to govern, not a multitude of individuals, but a demographically understood population. The population no longer comprised a "collection of subject wills who must obey the" sovereign, but after the eighteenth century, for Foucault, was to "be considered as a set of process to be managed at the level and on the basis of what is natural in these processes" (70). I am arguing that during plague outbreaks 'the population' (or ur-population) emerges within English political culture as the object of management.

[34] In his *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli asserts that in the origin of democracy the people subordinate "their own interests to the common good," so that in a republic the "Good Citizen ought to forget private injuries for love of his country" (25, 356). In *The Prince*, the subject is secondary to maintaining the principality, or the "fragile link between the Prince and his principality" (as Foucault rightly notes in his lectures, 92). Thus, the part that is unsaid when Machiavelli writes "men ought either to be well treated or crushed" in the context of conquest, is that the state must be preserved even if "fear" and destruction are the only motivation for maintaining it (Ch.3, par.7).

[35] Of course, the only direct or literal effect of the plague is the symptoms that led to the death of organisms (flea, rat, human, and other). All other effects spring in part or completely from the imagination and are thus the indirect effects of the infection. I would argue that general disorder caused by fear was a more direct effect of plague than the general call for piety was. However, I would also argue that the early moderns would have understood piety as by far the most direct product of a plague visitation, since that was the plague's imagined *raison d'etre*.

the contagion? The second way the plague taught was as a challenge to the state, and thus was very much a concern of the state, as visitations disrupted the ability of governors to maintain the existing order, while they simultaneously offered an opportunity (and an excuse) to exercise greater coercive authority over their subjects who became either consumed with their own struggle for survival or fatalistically inured to all suffering (Slack 232). For the governor (at all levels, but particularly local magistrates), this situation offered a challenge against which they struggled to maintain order *and* an opportunity to use their greater authority during plague time for other purposes (Hindle 147-8, 169-170; Slack 212-3, 295-303).

The three core conceits of the project (the unknowable plague, plague as a political object, and plague as pedagogy) are explored throughout each chapter.[36] The theoretical concerns form a progression that generally organizes the project, building upon each other to reach the project's conclusion. Each of these theoretical "foci" generally aligns with a specific chapter, but they are not wholly restrained by that organization. Rather, their intersecting implications serve as bridges across the chapters. Before theorizing the figurative plague, I will first offer an extended reading that exposes three central aspects of the plagued political imaginary. Nashe's use of plague shows the nature of the experience of governance during an outbreak and the terms under which the human and plague became linked. The novel as a whole demonstrates how the relationship of the subject to the governing authority was complicated and mediated by the presence of deadly epidemics like plague, which drives Jack Wilton back home, and the sweating sickness, that drove him out of England in the first place. Nashe's novel also exposes the

[36] I am deliberately eschewing the notion of "development" that would promote the view that what is emerging is doing so in a series of steps. There is no such organization to the emerging "structure" that is my target. Rather, the "feeling" is unevenly produced, emerging incomplete, not as a development built upon but rather as a thing that appears and retreats as it works its way across the psycho-social threshold into cultural reification as an ideology, practice, or theory.

potential freedom subjects may have found during a plague visitation, which will be explored in my second and third chapters. Finally, the novel passes through that freedom to expose the ultimate limits of the state's ability to produce order through coercive violence when that order does not align with subjects' interests, particularly when order conflicts with self-preservation, which is partially the subject of chapters two and four. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Four, this vision of failed governance in *The Unfortunate Traveler* becomes an apocalyptic social order where mutually assured death is the outcome of both authority and resistance.

Part II: Nashe's Plagued Picaresque

Written in 1593 (the year of the first major outbreak in almost thirty years), while Nashe was staying with his friend, bibliophile Robert Cotton, in Huntingdonshire,[37] the novel's tale is framed by disease: it begins with the sweating sickness in England and ends with the plague in Rome.[38] "This sweating sickness was a disease that a man then might catch and never go to a hot-house. Many masters desire to have such servants as would work till they sweat again, but in those days he that sweat never wrought again." This was the "sickness that made me [Jack Wilton] in a cold sweat take my heels and run out of England" (226). Frequently caught and punished, Wilton seems undeterred by any form of human corrective governance. It seems as if the sweating sickness experience of his youth has made him immune to correction, and with only disease as a model for authority he comes of age considering himself as "God's scourge from

[37] The circumstances of the novel's production bears some resemblance to *The Decameron*, that Boccaccio's book was on Nashe's mind might explain his novel's seemingly inexorableness journey to plague-afflicted Italy, the country first afflicted by the plague during the Black Death outbreak of the 1340s.

[38] The sweating sickness appeared in England in 1485, likely brought by Henry VII's soldiers from France, and it frequently erupted in devastating epidemics that could quickly kill a large percentage of the population. By 1551 the disease had run its course and disappeared from England (Caius 9). For all the virulent ferocity of the sweating sickness, it was during the "reign" of this other disease that the bubonic plague came to be differentiated as the singular "plague" (OED "plague" 3.c.).

above" upon his fellows' "dainty finicality" (226): he personifies a type of sickness or plague. He is a sort of man-plague.

However, it is the novel's arch-villain, Esdras of Granado, who personifies *the* deadly epidemic and, not inconsequentially, is a subject completely *immune* to all rods of correction including the terrible power of the "old rod" of the plague—as Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton call it in *News from Gravesend* (1157). "What plague canst thou name worse than I have had? Whether diseases," or man-made plagues of "imprisonment, poverty, banishment, I have passed through them all" (Nashe 278), Esdras declares in defiance to the threat of the disease. He has experienced the plagues of poverty and abuse as the subject of a ruthless regime, until no plagues move him. With disarming heroism, Esdras argues that the cruel government of Rome, with its horrible "strappo" punishment for those who carry weapons in the city, has inoculated him from fear of the plague, and rendered him immune to the plague's terror by the threats to his life under the Italian coercive system.[39] His robbery of Heraclide's house (made vulnerable by the plague) is simple opportunism, but in raping her he makes the opportunity one of political retribution as he uses the "corpse" of her husband, the master of the house, as a "pillow" for his revenge.[40] For his five hundred similar acts of rape and murder, Esdras—named after an apocalyptic book left out of Christian bibles that predicts wars and the rebuke of sinners—is the people's hero, striking back at the master class, seemingly unafraid of their coercive power just as he is unafraid of the plague that is God's coercive power.

[39] Esdras' argument is strikingly similar to the one Thomas More expresses through Hythloday in the first part of *Utopia* about "the limits of justice" and punishments that are "too extreme and cruel" for simple theft (18-9).
[40]As Oliver Arnold notes in his reading of *Titus* that draws upon the Tarquin rape of the Roman Lucrece, rape is not just a personal violence but also a political act: it might found a dynasty, as Caliban tries to do with Miranda; it denotes a destroyed enemy, and, as Macro has the daughter of his foe, Jonson's Sejanus, raped before she is killed; finally, it ultimately solidifies conquest, as (according to some readings of the scene) Henry V, in a sense rapes the French princess Catherine (103-4). Further, as Tina Mohler describes in her reading of sodomitical desire in *Titus Andronicus*, this rape on the "pillow" of the husband is a rape of this house-holding master and the system within which he is an important political component as well.

For Heraclide (the wife whose family has died of the plague and who Jack is staying with), this political act, this revenge by Esdras upon the wealthy, is also a plague: "art thou ordained to be a worse plague to me than the plague itself? Have I escaped the hands of God to fall into the hands of man?" she asks (275). She connects the plague and Esdras' attack (and later raping of her) as forms of violence that are alike; the plague has robbed her house of life, Esdras has now come to rob it of wealth and complete the plague's destruction by raping her upon the "corpse" of her husband. She makes Esdras a type of plague that she compares to the greatest of plagues. In doing so, her questions go to the root of the disorder Esdras represents, and exposes the dangers of the state's coercive practices that match the plague's destructive potential. Rather than subjugating a resistant subject like Esdras, the state's violence is instead appropriated by him to achieve greater freedom from state control. Indeed, the rape and Heraclide's suicide are grotesque consummations of the plague-man's terrible and tragic destruction of the household, *and* a clear human-plague collaboration that increases the tragedy beyond what "God's plague" alone would have wrought.

In Nashe's novel, it is Esdras's further violence that drives Heraclide to suicide. This is a violence that is brought about as a consequence of the coercive excesses of the polity of Rome. Heraclide is raped upon her husband's supposedly dead body after most of her household (including her seven children) have been carried off by the plague. She rants after Esdras leaves, her sorrow so great that she kills herself over her husband's body, and in the final pathetic twist, he wakes form his death-like state to discover her corpse (281).[41] The husband's "return" from the dead foregrounds the terrible destruction that has been wrought upon the household, and the

[41] This is echoed in *The Wonderfulll Year* and of course most famously in *Romeo and Juliet*: the final death and awaking from near death to find the corpse of the wife/husband resembles the plague deaths Dekker describes. One person is infected and a loved one who cares for them is infected (perhaps by the person they are carrying for) and dies. The survivor recovers to find their loved one's corpse lying beside them.

manmade horror that has completed the destruction the plague began. The revived householder now rules over an empty house.[42]

The political significance of coercion frames Esdras' assault as the poor's retribution upon the wealthy, exposing the consequence of a coercive practice that cannot be distinguished from the plague's tyranny and perhaps even goes beyond that tyranny. The second time Jack is imprisoned in Rome he begins to regret his travel: travelers are "slaves in a strange land," he says. "We [traveling Englishmen] had rather live as slaves in another land, crouch and cap and be servile to every jealous Italian's and proud Spaniard's humour … than live as free men and lords in our own country" (283).[43] Jack's experiences within Rome's violently coercive system favorably frames the English political system, by producing an Esdras whose actions are a reaction to a violently coercive and Catholic Italian political system.[44] In *The Unfortunate Traveler,* coercion fails when it equals the plague's terror without producing God's aim of preserving and strengthening the social world that remains. In this violent apocalyptic world in which the distinctions of ally and enemy become meaningless and mutual destruction is potentially the result of any and all conflicts.[45] Jack Wilton seems to learn that only God can produce coercion that is both terrible and corrective. Man's task is to be guided toward

[42] This might mark a commentary upon the retreat of the nobles during a plague visit: if the Faces, Subtles, and Dolls die, who will the master class rule when the plague has gone?
[43] The "slaves in a strange land" alludes to the Moses leading the Jews to freedom, which in Jack's context this could be read a sort of chiasmus or inversion of Moses story. Moses leads slaves to freedom while Jack, in search of freedom, finds only slavery. The English servitude that he sought to escape was actually the freedom he desires.
[44] While the anonymous emblem on the title page to the 1604 title page of *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* warned "Thou shalt labor till thou return to duste," *The Unfortunate Traveler* written one year after the previous major plague visitation seems to suggest that that is probably a better fate than, "thou shalt labor, while we torture you, until the plague kills you or we get around to it," which is the world of Rome in the novel.
[45] Gilman here argues that the plague produces a theodicy that must produce a "psychotic structure" of God the destroyer though for a reason – however inscrutable that reason may be. Thus, the plague is part of the word of God and like the patron saint of the plague St. Sebastian, a martyred victim of Roman political coercion, plague victims are martyrs to divine coercion (69-70, 73, 75). Esdras and Nashe's Roman state explicitly, and perversely link the political and divine correction.

correction under the plague's ever present terrible threat, but not become synonymous with that threat (Slack 67, 80-110).[46]

In Nash's Rome, rather than marking the limits of coercive violence and the motivating terror that violence might induce, the plague marks a threat more or less equal to that of the Catholic Pope's government of Rome. Indeed, the plague in Rome may simply be the baseline of terror and coercion that the Pope's own terror and coercion are enacted to exceed. Either at the hands of the popular and brutal hero Esdras, through the torture of the living autopsy of the corrupt Jews of the Pope's court, at the hands of the vengeful Cutwolf, or the subsequent brutal revenge of the people upon Cutwolf, the plague's terror recedes into the background and becomes incidental to the terror that man inflicts upon man in Nashe's apocalyptic Italy. Within that Rome the "tyranny of the malady" is confused with the tyranny of man, as the cries of women from within a house might be caused by the plague's tyrannical violence or a man's tyrannical rape (274). The plague raises fear in the master class, as Heraclide attempts to use the plague as a threat to keep Esdras at bay: "Death will have thy body infallible for breaking into my house that he had selected for his private habitation" (277). She operates upon the belief that the plague now protects the house from other threats, as she assumes that no one would needlessly expose themselves to a plague infected house. She is also operating on the belief that the plague, having spared those that remain, has marked them with God's judgment that they are worthy to live. Thus, Esdras is violating not only the law and common plague wisdom and medical advice, but the divine law of God's selection of the survivors when so many have died (Gilman 171-2).

[46] As Ernest Gilman notes "For England, Paul Slack's history [of the plague] is authoritative" ("Subject" 25). Slack literally wrote *the* book for early modern English plague.

This is the plague's government, to which Esdras was immune. Dekker describes the death and plague in *Wonderfull Year* as producing a "Feare and Trembling (the two catch-polles of Death) [that] arrest every one: No parley will be graunted, no composition stood vpon, But the Allarum is struck vp, the *Toxin* ringes out for life, and no voice heard but *Tue, Tue, Kill, Kill*" (15). But for Esdra this threat and terror does not perform any sort of social function, as it does for Heraclide. The disprivileged criminal Esdras, who has faced the plagues of poverty, famine, man-made coercion and punishment, is immune to the threats of the plague of God.[47]

But, when confronted with the manmade terror of Catholic Italy, Jack turns away, retreats to the reasonable protection and milder coercion of service to English masters (and thus King) that is only sometimes violent. It is within his final confrontation with Italian violence that the novel pushes Jack Wilton's lesson through the tyrannical man-made coercive violence and into the plague's production of proper terror. This is a terror that should be different from man's justice, which is backed by limited coercion. The plague, in the opacity of its purpose and mechanism, produces a sort of government through terror, but coming from God this is a proper terror that cannot be anything but productively corrective. It must be for the betterment of man and his society. However, the terror of Nashe's Rome produces is an apocalyptic state at war with its subjects, as the mutual destruction of each becomes a possibility. This non-productive form of sovereignty, while not matching the plague-sovereignty I will describe in the final chapter of this project, resembles that destructive regime.

The coercive production of terror in Nashe's Rome drives Zadok to make the plague a weaponized instrument for revenge. As he seeks to become infected and then infect his enemy, the plague becomes just another weapon for man to use upon man, despite the fact that the

[47] Later the immediate and personally direct threat of vengeance will only seem to move him; despite seeming to confess his sins, he will be exposed as lying and beyond redemption.

plague will almost certainly kill the killer (295). Such a revenge is apocalyptic—all death, anyone and everyone's death, becomes a possibility: all are bare life. Jack flees the apocalyptic Italian state that kills itself by killing its people. England provides a haven from the madness of Zadok's vengeful plan of mutual destruction against the Pope, as all life has become inconsequential and death the ultimate and only tool of power.[48] Yet despite Nashe's positive image of England, in other literary contexts England's government is collusive with the plague. In *Beware the Cat,* William Baldwin expresses anxiety towards the coercive excesses of the Elizabethan state that are meant to enforce correction, but are imagined to actually be a site of potential contagion and thus a threat to all. According to the narrator, the gruesomely unburied criminal remains displayed as a threatening warning to wrong doers, rot and pollute the air and risk bringing on the plague (6). Further, such gruesome displays are echoed by Dekker's description the "drawn and quartered" quarantined houses of the plague which all can see, and which, in Nash's Catholic Italy, are a general condition of coercive state excesses that has become indistinguishable from the plague. In these cases, the plague and human governance are connected together by all three authors. In producing a coercive excess on par with the plague, the state causes the polis to descend into a perversely coercively violent condition where man's terror matches and even outdoes the plague's terror.

[48] One of the earliest (and most controversial) stories of the plague and its origins within Europe is the deliberate infection of the trading city of Caffa by an army of "heathens." The Tartars used the plague as a weapon while laying siege to Genoese traders in control of the city, so the story goes, by catapulting infected bodies over the walls and thereby infecting the Europeans. After the Tartars retreated, decimated by the plague, the Christians fled, only to bring infection to Europe for the first time (Gottfried 37). Though historians have come to doubt the veracity of this account of the encounter, this popular myth imagines the plague as a weapon and from the East, a weapon used by heathens from the very beginning.

SECTION II: The Play of "plagues" and The Plague

The Plague of the mid to late fourteenth century, for nearly three centuries the disease stalked from one village, city, or country to another. "Plague" was a word that had a deadly vitality, a black and invisible life that we cannot fully grasp, but one the early modern English could never have failed to recognize. The literature of the period likewise cannot entirely elide the presence of the deadly disease, but perhaps surprisingly it produces relatively few moments when The Plague that stalked the early modern world is actually present, let alone a sustained presence (Shapiro 277). This is the first rub for many of the analyses of this dissertation, particularly that of Chapter Two: *1 Henry IV*'s characters, in particular Falstaffhad a tremendous impact upon medieval and early modern society.[49] After the initial wave, use "plague" figuratively, and, if we follow Barbara Fass Leavy's influential *To Blight with Plague* (1992), the "figurative use of plague was quite detached from any treatment" of the disease itself (3). The figurative "plague" is *not*, according to Leavy, *The* Plague. Therefore, before beginning a sustained literary analysis, I will first understand the nature of early modern figurative plagues.

Part I: "Figuring" The Plague

On one level, Leavy is entirely correct to differentiate between figurative and literal plague.[50] However, the first problem with her argument within the early modern context is that there is no biological plague concept. That is to say, while the phrase "infected with plague"

[49] As Ziegler notes, the debate is about the "precise significance" of that impact and no longer about the importance of that impact (1). For Slack, the plague brought new behaviors in the response to the ravages of the disease ("Impact" 4).

[50] Leavy's point, and Susan Sontag's before her, is quite valid. The diseases that cause so much suffering and killed so many are very real conditions, while figurative diseases are names for circumstances that have some of the logics of actual disease mapped onto them. Further, seeing disease as a figurative entity rather than for what it literally is, risks the kinds of damaging judgments made against homosexuals during and in the aftermath of the AIDS crisis *or* that were made against the poor and disordered of Falstaff's East Cheap in early modern England.

designates a physiological condition today, four centuries ago that condition was only known through the effects of an outbreak that comingled with non-biological elements like poverty, governmental policy, largely superstitious medical and other theories, and of course religious belief. The Plague was not, in the early modern contexts, the literal result of a *y.pestis* infection, as we know it to be, but a figurative and general "blow" or "misfortune" that caused mass death, suffering, and disorder.[51]

First, Leavy's call for a distinction between literal and figurative plague conflicts with early modern understandings of figurative "plagues" as potential footholds from which humorally conceived Plague could erupt. Figurative "plagues" were more than metonymical stand-ins for an outbreak, in that they were perceived to lead to such outbreaks, becoming conceptually synecdochal as a part of The Plague. Just as there are many sources of disorder in *1 Henry IV*, there were many species of figurative plague in early modern popular literature and Plague writing. Dekker's *Raven's Almanacke* (a treatment of mostly non-bubonic and frequently figurative "plagues" throughout which The Plague lurks) lists twelve types of "Capitall" plague,[52] all of which are conditions of life, with nothing—from our scientific perspective at least—to do with the bubonic plague. Dekker argues that other things might be "a plague": other diseases and general misfortunes, "warres and troubles, sometymes" were joined "with famyne and scarsitie, sometyme with sickness and diseases, and sundrye other *kinds* of plagues" (sig. B5r; emphasis added).[53] Disease is now generally thought of in medically advanced societies as a

[51] Only after the reign of what we now call the Black Death did plague come to mean disease, death, and disorder that, in its most horrible manifestation, was sufficient to disrupt the social and political order, and only after the epidemic of The Sweat, did "*The* Plague" come to be restricted to the disease caused by *y. pestis* (OED, "plague").
[52] Many were named after saints and included "The Horne plague" of the cuckold, the Wife's plague of being married to a poor man, Saint Benet's plague of a scolding wife, Saint Paulus plague of debt, imprisonment, and creditor cruelty, or "the fryer's plague, is no holy plague" but smelling "good cheare" and not know how to get it (B4-C).
[53] He echoes this in his pamphlet on the 1603 outbreak *A Wonderfull Yeare* that I touch on briefly in the Introduction and the next chapter.

manageable object, not as a divine punishment or a mysterious affliction—even though such views persist. It is generally believed to be well explained by science-based medicine and effectively contained by governmental medical agencies and state certified doctors.[54] But for Dekker, in the *Almanacke*, the figurative "capitall plagues"—like capital crimes—left unchecked will cause "plague to hang upon yeu, that the pest cart of Newgate will carrie your bodies away in heapes" (sig. C1r).[55] As René Girard argues, these plague metaphors were "endowed with an almost incredible vitality" compared to how we now see them, because ours is "a world where the plague and epidemics have generally disappeared" and thus hold far less mystery and significance (138).

The Almanacke's "plagues" evoke suffering—and sometimes punishment—that the pamphlet connects to circumstance and behavior. The "apes without tails" (sig. C1r) bring plagues on themselves and each other, and it is these "plagues" that might be cured or, rather, governed. After describing his list of figurative "Capitall Plagues" Dekker turns briefly to a few types of medical and health related "plagues" that are not *The* Plague but 'gateway' plagues or conditions that might lead to The Plague (sig. B5r).[56] As Dekker depicts them, lesser "plagues" were more than figurative and connotative shadows: they were harbingers of disorder and/or

[54] Thus, the ready optimism of the Centers for Disease Control's press releases when the first Ebola victim was discovered in the United States in the summer of 2014. Although the ready hysteria that followed when containment procedures failed (in the US in particular) suggests that this optimistically positivist belief is hardly universal—and the breakdowns in disease control protocol offer some good reason for an anti-positivist outlook.

[55] Figurative plagues which represent disruptions in good order and potentially general social imbalance were thought of as potential causes of plague outbreaks, and were thus plagues in the sense that they stood in for The Plague as precursors. As Bryon Lee Grigsby reads John Lydgate's plague writing: "Adherence to social rules seems to affect one's health because it enables one to lead a happier life. The emphasis on social hierarchy and rules is designed to create happier individuals, which in turn creates a happier community that is relatively disease free" (134). Order and obedience allow one to be happy and healthy, thus Dekker's figurative plagues describe states of disorder leading to general unhappiness and ill-health that might include Plague.

[56] This 1609 pamphlet essentially ignores the Paracelsian innovations English doctors had been adapting. More interestingly, there is very little concern for piety or God. Other than the attachment of these "Capitall Plagues" to saints or God, the divine is hardly present in the text—an odd omission for a plague text, which are frequently concerned with "lifesaving" piety.

humoral imbalance that might lead to or exacerbate ill health and even a general bubonic plague visitation. If there were too many people suffering from poverty, too many unhappy husbands or wives, too many old men carrying on like unwise youths, too many cuckolds, foolish inheritors, disordered households, etc., England might become susceptible to The Plague.[57] These figurative or "capitall" plagues—as Dekker calls them—were conceptually synecdochical, part and parcel of *The* Plague in a time when medical health was not just biological but humoral, miasmic, and theological. To our scientific understanding Plague is metonymical but distinct form the disorders that accompany it. However, to the early modern perception, disorder and Plague were very much medically, through humoral theory, intertwined. Figurative "plagues" were considered, medically, as a potential cause, thus a synecdochal part of The Plague outbreak.[58] These personal "disorders" were the marks of humoral imbalance that was well understood as making the body susceptible to disease (Lodge sig. B2v; Moulten sig. B3r; Vandernote sig. A3r). The implication of *The Almanacke* is that the unbalanced humors of individuals and society are "Capital Plagues," like capital crimes, which pose a threat to the political and social order, potentially rendering England susceptible to Plague (Dekker, "Almanacke" sig. B5r). As John Donne puts it in his mourning poem, "An Anatomy of the World": "There is no health; physicians say that we /At best, enjoy but a neutrality" (91-2). As Gilman notes, for Donne humanity existed "neutrality," everyone was understood to literally carry infectious death within

[57] There is a very humoral bent to this understanding of the relationship between the "health" of the society and the risk of plague: imbalance, disorder, improper behavior, unhappiness, etc. in individuals or groups can lead to plague.
[58] I am using "synecdoche" here to express the early modern understanding of the nature of plague. However, in considering the nature of disorder, I have evoked metonymy to highlight our contemporary understanding of the distinction between an event (like a Plague outbreak) and the disorder associated with it, early modern perceptions likely would not have recognized such a clear distinction. Where metonymical relationships are objects associated with each other only conceptually, the synechdochical are objects seen as connected, as a part of each other. For the early modern, Dekker's "capitall plagues" as sins, disorders, and possibly humoral imbalances (both for individuals and the community) seemed to be directly connected to The Plague (Gilman, "Metaphor" 223-5).

them ("Writing" 18). A slight shift in the balance of the humors of one person or a group of people could lead to an epidemic outbreak and mass death (Healy, "Fictions" 43).

Understanding plagued-utterances as evoking a plague-like condition therefore humoral imbalance, and thus as potential sources of Plague exposes the "Capitall" significance of Dekker's first figurative "plagues" in his pamphlet, *The Raven's Almanacke*. He describes St Pauluss plague of debt, imprisonment, and creditor cruelty, which is echoed by the eighth "blacke plague" of a man with no money and unmerciful creditors (sig. B4r), Dekker presents the behavior of creditors, as well as the condition of debtors, as somehow plague-like. They are "Caplital Plagues" that preceded The Plague within the book, as disorders of the social order and personal well-being making humoral health impossible. These "plagues" are potential causes of Plague in early modern Plague theory. Dekker was certainly one of the most prolific plague pamphleteers, but his obsession was fueled by the commercial exigencies of his writing: there was an interested reading public. Thus, the disease and its figurative counterparts served as a powerful basis for his social and moral criticism, and his pamphlets fed an enthusiastic popular readership, thus indicating that he was far from alone in his response to the disease and in his criticism of the Elizabethan government's response (Slack, "Impact" 238; Healy "Defoe's" 27-8). Dekker's plague writing represents the general understanding of Plague.

Second, for Leavy's purpose it is enough to view the disease as a discrete micro-biological event, rather than recognizing that a plague outbreak was a source of extreme social disorder. However, the view of a Plague that is distinct disease caused by *y. pestis* projects the modern metonymy regarding Plague into the past. In the absence of an understanding of the mechanisms of disease (or other disasters), the disorder that accompanies (causatively before and during) an outbreak becomes intertwined with the disease object which, for early moderns had

nothing to do with a microbe discovered by Alexandre Yersin in 1894. Thus, this project is *not* following an object oriented ontological approach, but is nevertheless invested in the plague as originating from the "thing" *y. pestis* and existing as an "assemblage [of] … vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects see them" (Bennett 5). Not all of the entities in the assemblage (see footnote 16) are material, some are conceptual objects—in this case "plagues"—created by humanity. Further, "humans and their intentions … are not the sole or always the most profound actant in the assemblage" and "agency is … distributed across [the] mosaic" (37-8). My consideration of the plague-object seeks to decenter the relationship between the act of trillions of microbes infecting millions of humans and the political consequences of those infections from the homocentric to the territory in between disease and those it victimized. That territory is where the early modern Plague is to be found.

When an early modern community was struck with Plague, it was not thought of as being struck by a highly virulent microbial infection that was afflicting a significant portion of the population, causing death in a large percentage of those stricken with the disease, and producing panic and thus an absence of order. Rather, it was struck by sickness that capriciously afflicted some and not others, causing a panic and an absence of order, as a significant core of the master-class fled, and, after 1578, it was characterized by a focused and invasive attempt to produce order by the masters that remained—done at the distant direction of the monarchical representatives (the Justices of the Peace). All of these conditions and effects were part of *The* Plague.[59] Further, the various forms of disorder and attempts at order that accompanied Plague had less to do with the nature of the outbreak and more to do with socio-economic and political

[59] I will return to this claim in more detail below. While it is clearly a fallacy to suggest that disastrous natural events are synonymous with the disorder that follow those events, that is only because we have causal, scientific frameworks to explain why such things as diseases and hurricanes occur. The early modern framework encompassed concerns that were not always entirely or at all related causally to those natural events.

factors unrelated to the disease.[60] The wealthy, who ruled early modern society, fled, leaving their social 'inferiors' to face not just Plague, but also a lack of money and thus food scarcity (if they did not receive charity) as the economy came to a near standstill (Slack "Impact" 188-191, 194). Responses to disorder "were shaped as much by the competing forces of English political life as by the phenomenon of the plague itself" (200). Polysemic "plague" takes on meanings that are rooted in these other consequences of a Plague visitation and features of an outbreak. The Plague *was* far more the very visible disorder that accompanied a bubonic plague outbreak than it was the unknown microbe in the foreguts of dying fleas, who regurgitated the microbe into their human hosts. Given this early modern plague assemblage,[61] it is not surprising that Shakespeare's fictional histories of the disordered reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry VI, and Richard III are infected with the language of health and illness, specifically disease and even Plague throughout the politically charged events of these plays (Reid 475).[62]

Related to the polyvalence of "plague," the third problem with Leavy's conclusion that figurative "plagues" are "quite detached" from The Plague is that early modern perceptions of Plague differed from ours because, as I have described, they literally lacked the ability to see it as we can through microscopes.[63] First, before the microscope and modern science, the invisible

[60] As the 2005 hurricane Katrina, for example, shows "the disparities of daily existence are painfully exposed and horribly exacerbated when the thin infrastructural network is rent by disaster" (Logan "Fright," 38). The thin infrastructure of the underclass are endemic to poverty, not hurricanes or plagues. The most notorious example of orders to combat plague had nothing to do with the actual disease but everything to do with social and perhaps economic factors, as for instance when Jews were persecuted during early outbreaks in Europe.

[61] Popularized by Deleuze and Guattari, assemblage here indicates that Plague is both a "virtual assemblage" of plague objects, "plague" ideas, plagued human beings, medical theory, religious moralization, social and economic conditions, political idiosyncrasies (Latour 119), *and* a very shadowy *y. pestis* object which I am to some extent trying to ignore because early moderns did not know it existed.

[62] Henry V's reign, as Shakespeare portrays it, is ordered by conquest or external conflict; although war still breeds disease among the soldiers who are still to a large degree disordered, and Plague from the smell of their rotting bodies is his final threat to France should he fail to win at Agincourt.

[63] Gilman's afterword to *Representing the Plague in Early Modern England* explores the multiplicity of plague metaphors ("Metaphors). As noted in the introduction, there is simply no "real" plague within any early modern writing. The *y. pestis* object was entirely unknown, and thus with few exceptions all that was written about it was on some level figurative—obviously the suffering, plague dead, spread of the infection, physical signs, etc. were literal

virus that caused the plague could only have been understood figuratively. Indeed, early modern attempts to understand the phenomenon causes Plague to expand far beyond the scientifically and medically demarcated space typically occupied by disease today. It was not a name for a disease caused by the spread of a microbe throughout the human cardiovascular system through the *epithelium* cells into the lymph nodes, which allows the disease to proliferate in the human body.[64] No, The Plague was the name for the actual *and* imagined causes and effects of *y.pestis* infection in humans; though, the actual mechanisms of those effects were always simultaneously material *and* figurative.[65]

Plague as a metaphor is an Aristotelian "alien" estranged from its context, Leavy argues, as she attempts to tease out the broad, centuries-spanning significance of "plague" (1, 3-8). However, plague metaphors are also a Baconian "lens" that attempts to understand Plague. Metaphor was the only "lens" which early moderns could use to "inspect" the invisible disease that we know of as originating from the *y. pestis* bacterium. While in the modern era science has allowed us to differentiate between plagues we see through the microscope's lens, in the early modern world such clean distinctions could not exist. There was no literal plague in the early modern world, only a web of figurative polysemous plagues that together attempted to describe the unknowable Plague. Thus, figurative "plagues" were in one sense always explorations of a Plagued world. Dekker's catalogue of "plagues" in the *Raven's Almanac* at first glance seem

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reality. However, the significance or mechanisms early modern's attached to these things were figurative. Before the discovery of the microbe at the Pasteur Institute by Yersin and the advent of scientific microbial and immunology understanding, it was literally impossible to speak of *the* plague object as we do today. The thing itself was not known. Only its effects were known—we might make a similar argument about the objects under science's microscope, but that is far beyond the current scope of this chapter or dissertation for that matter.

[64] This paraphrased slightly technical description produced for mass consumption on Wikipedia would have been essentially gibberish to early modern English plague doctors—just as the assertion that astrological signs could represent a destabilization that caused plague should be today.

[65] Even bubos, the swollen lymph nodes of the infected were metonymically separate from the disease itself as an effect but not the disease.

entirely non-medical, but in fact are understood as not clearly distinct from physiological disease. Dekker treats figurative plagues, minor disease plagues, and The Plague together in the same text, placing the figurative but "capital plagues" before The Plague. As I have noted, these "capital plagues" serve as prelude to The Plague, and the *Almanac* reveals that Leavy's (and Sontag's) separation of figurative from literal disease does not sufficiently account for plague in the early modern English context. Instead, to some extent, all "plague" utterances were a part of the general "need to explain the inexplicable horror of The Plague," as Leavy acknowledges toward the end of her effort (220, 221-2). Each new usage offered a potential new understanding or test of the meaning of "plague" and Plague through metaphor in a time when the object that caused The Plague, *y. pestis,* could not be known in any other way except through metaphors. It is difficult to imagine the desperate energy that would be behind such imaginings in a time when Plague might suddenly appear and kill a third of the city.

Part II: The plague-Assemblage

To think of early modern plague, then, is to forget that the cause of death and suffering was an infectious microbe, and instead accept the early modern truth that the cause of the massive death and suffering was a mysterious Plague-object(s). Here Graham Harman's point that "not . . . all objects are equally real" is helpful: "it is false that dragons have autonomous reality in the same manner as a telephone pole" (5). No, *y. pestis* and the early modern Plague and "plagues" were not always real in the same way, however, "they are equally *objects*" (5). That is to say, the figurative object of the Plague exists just as its biological and figurative fellows do. Indeed, the figurative "plagues" of which Leavy is skeptical may have more in common with The Plague of the early modern world, than that Plague has with *y. pestis*.

In some sense, The Plague seems to absorb related "objects" into it, as it literally becomes attached biologically to its hosts—sometimes this connection is willing as with Nashe's Zadok. For instance, the trappings of governance or management of outbreak (searchers, gravediggers, quarantine) became a conceptual part of The Plague in Dekker's recounting of the plague of 1603 ("Wonderfulll Yeare" 15). Before *The Plague Orders*, Plague traditionally meant the absence of normal government—at least so William Cecil claimed in the 1563 first draft of the *Plague Orders*.[66] Certainly the normal mechanisms of government were reduced during Plague outbreaks both before and even after 1578 orders were put into effect. But after the issuance of these orders, Plague outbreaks came to be associated with greater and more focused governmental presence rather than less. "Central and local governors were preoccupied during epidemics with concepts, not of neighborliness but of 'order'" (Slack "Impact" 303). The former was shorthand for local, formal and informal, collaborative measures to keep the peace. The later, other sort of "'order'" was one imposed from above, one more clearly more repressive and authoritarian.

> The word [order] was constantly reiterated in documents concerning plague, in contexts which show that it carried two meanings: command and direction, on the one hand; tidiness, peace and quiet, on the other. The same word covered both because they were inseparable: one followed from the other. (303)

[66] Slack does not agree with Cecil's assessment. Despite the impression that authority was absent, "those in public authority, generally remained in an infected town, or a sufficient number of them did so" (118). There are a variety of political reasons Cecil might have wanted to overstate things a bit: his potential hyperbole supports the central government's desire to institute national orders that penetrated into local rule more robustly than the normal order did since in normal legal proceedings the will of the locals was extremely influential (Sharpe "Crime" 98-99). Nevertheless, the claim of a knowledgeable contemporary is difficult to dismiss in favor of a historian writing in the 1980s. The fact remains that normal government did slow down and even stop for months during the worst parts of a plague outbreak (Slack "Impact" 18) and plague orders gave magistrates beginning with the historically direct representatives of the monarch, Justices of the Peace, great authority with little oversight from above and none from the local leaders (*Orders*).

All of the concern for order—with few references to saving lives in plague texts—suggests that "plague" engenders a perhaps equally virulent disorder. Some of Falstaff's usages seem to suggest that this disorder brings a degree of freedom, but Plague also brought an active penetrating and quarantining practice of governance.[67] Indeed, figurative "plague" might be a potential, synecdochal foothold from which The Plague could erupt, but that plague was also the associated features of an outbreak: including a more robust but specific form of governance (like disciplinary practices, biopolitical concerns, quarantine, disruption of traditional relations, etc.).; the breakdown of order and perhaps greater personal freedom; a call for sympathy or in darker moments a rejection of all sympathy; God's judgment and/or various medical theories; heightened wariness or watchfulness of neighbors; foregrounding of a concern for individual and collective health; and, of course, the tragedy of whole families dying and mass death that leaves holes in the community (Gilman, "Metaphor" 223-5). All of these became a part of the Plague-assemblage.

[67] In part, this is the topic of section two and is expanded upon in chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO
"A plague of all": Ordering in Time of "plagues"

"*Gods plague is the last and the most heavy, and that is when a man hath much wealth and no* [guilt upon his] *conscience continual health but is pastgrace, and can talke of God, yet keeps company with the Devill. This plague sore strikes to the heart, and will strike many even of the better sort.*"

Thomas Dekker, *The Ravens Almanacke:*

"That Aire, and Earth, that do such plagues relive
What are those men but plagues, that plague by men
All men are such, that teach sin in effect;
And all do so, that sine but now and then,
If now and then they sinne, in overt act.
What can containe us, if these plagues cannot"

John Davies, *Humours heau'n on earth with the ciuile warres of death and fortune. As also the triumph of death: or, the picture of the plague, according to the life; as it was in anno Domini. 1603*

"*I will neither purchase The Plague for six pence in the pound and a groat bill-money, nore venture my small stock into contagious parishes. You have your answer; fare-you-well, as fast as you can, sir.*"

Thomas Middleton *Your Five Young Gallants*

SECTION I: The Rebellious "Plagues"

With seventeen "plague" utterances (fourteen of them spoken by Falstaff) *1 Henry IV* is unquestionably a "plagued" text. Even though the actual Plague is absent from the play, the plague is in the air more in this play than any of Shakespeare's other plays.[68] This chapter will

[68] Only two plays have double-digit "plague" usages: *Timon of Athens* with thirteen and *Troilus and Cressida* with ten. *King Lear* has nine, there are six in *King John*, five each in *Coriolanus, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Richard II*, and seven total in all three parts of *Henry VI*. There are four each in *Twelfth Night*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Tempest*. Fifteen more uses are scattered throughout another eleven plays: *Hamlet, Henry V, Henry VIII, Macbeth, Richard III, Cymbeline, Julius Caesar, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Much Ado about Nothing, All's Well that Ends Well*, and *Pericles*. None of the histories are without "plague." Of the tragedies only *Titus Andronicus* and *Antony and Cleopatra* have no "plague" in them at all; although the latter has two uses of "pestilence" (Plague's other name) that are rather Plague-like. For the comedies/romances nine are without it: *Merchant of Venice, Taming of the Shrew, Comedy of Errors, Measure for Measure, Midsummer Night's Dream, The Winter's Tale, As You Like It, The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *Merry Wives of Windsor* (from which Falstaff's darker nature is generally banished). Of the thirty-eight plays Shakespeare wrote or co-wrote, the word "plague" is used in three quarters of them.

root out the political connections between the figurative "plague" in the play and the early modern Plague. One unfortunate consequence of the lack of an obvious plague-as-disease element in the play is that *1 Henry IV* has been almost entirely overlooked by literary scholars of plague and disease. In beginning to amend this lack of attention, my analysis of the play is in three stages. First, the plaguey nature of the disorders of *1 Henry IV* (primarily war and Hotspur) are established. Second, I turn to Falstaff's rather "plaguey" nature and his uses of "plague" that mark him as a unique and potentially serious source of disorder. Third, I expose how the methods by which Hal confronts the disorder he finds are rooted in the Elizabethan Plague management. Shakespeare frames Hal as a proponent and practitioner of new forms of plague-based governmental practice, infiltrating and dividing the Eastcheap cohort against itself. Finally, my effort in this chapter is to trace something like an "official transcript"[69] of plague within the discourse of order and disorder that appears within the play. My goal in this chapter is to uncover the dominant view of Plague in the relationship between one of Shakespeare's more famously irregular characters, Sir Jack Falstaff, and the Crowned Prince who will become perhaps Shakespeare most successful monarch, Henry V.

Plague cohabitates with war and famine in the territory of catastrophe in the early modern English imagination—as Dekker's *The Almanacke: foretelling of a Plague, Famine, and Civill*

[69] This somewhat limited term theorized by James C. Scott in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1990) is preferable because this official discourse was certainly not hegemonic nor was it dominating in the way ideology would suggest, and the more contested concept, discourse, encompasses Scott's transcripts (x; Leeb 133; Gal 414), which is the broader target of my overall project. Transcript here serves as a useful way to address a smaller constituent part of the discourse surrounding plague. While Susan Gal finds the overtly theatrical metaphor in Scott's theory to be shallow, for me it is part of what recommends the term (418-21). This would have been an almost rehearsed discourse that represented "how the dominant group would wish to have things appear" (Scott 4). There are problems with Scott's larger theory of transcripts: an overly-reductive binary of dominant and oppressed and "inconsistencies around the self" and the subjectivity that drive individuals to produce discourses for any number of reasons (Leeb 134; Gal 413-4). Further, the limiting notion of locally formed transcripts cannot account for the broad sweep of ideology that permeates otherwise discrete communities and thus problematizes Scotts theory of the "public" (Gal 415-6). In the following chapters I will broaden and deepen my inquiry to account for that which is deliberately limited aspect of the discourse that emerges in this chapter.

Warre shows. Middleton, in his pamphlet, *The Meetings of Gallants at an Ordinaire*, even imagines a debate between personifications of these disasters to discover which is worse: Pestilence (Plague's other name) wins.[70] War and plague were two parts of the catastrophic triumvirate of the early modern world and they are joined in the figures of Hotspur and Glendower.[71] It is not insignificant that much of King Henry IV's opening speech describing the recently ended war with Wales and Scotland contains language alluding to humoral imbalance and Plague.

He describes English soil, the mother of the nation, ingesting "her children," an abomination and one that draws to mind the mass burial of the plague dead (children were particularly susceptible to plague). He mentions "the meteors of a troubled heaven" that some felt could cause a plague. Finally, from the first line Shakespeare laces the King's speech with the language of bodily, humoral shock: "So shaken as we are, so wan with care"—an unbalanced state understood to make one susceptible to sickness. The "intestine shock … of civil butchery" intertwines medical and political into a threat to all of England (1.1.1-13). The disordered political state at England's borders, and thus within Christendom, might attract disease, as Lodge suggests of plague: imbalanced humors are "infected by the attraction of corrupted aire, or infection of evil vapours" (sig. B2v). As the play begins, Henry IV's ambition to join the crusade

[70] Pestilence appears thirteen times in Shakespearean drama and not above twice in any play. However, in many cases it seems to indicate something fairly Plague-like. For instance, as noted in the second footnote, it is used twice in *Antony and Cleopatra* where both times it seems to refer to plague: "the most infectious pestilence on thee!" and "token'd pestilence" (2.5.61, 3.10.9). In other plays like *Othello* or *Hamlet* it pestilence is general sickness, as "plague" often is. But it is in the other play that includes two uses of the word, *Richard II*, that are overtly political as well as plaguey. Richard is the "Devouring pestilence that hangs in our air" that Gaunt warns after Bolingbroke's exile (1.3.290), and Richard declares that "Armies of pestilence, … shall strike / Your children yet unborn and unbegot" (3.3.89-91) their armies in rebellion produce other armies of disordered disease that threaten their future.
[71] In a sense, the rotund Falstaff is the opposite of dearth and famine, in the dearth filed 1590s this might have caused his character to conjure up the specter of famine in his gross differentiation from anyone who'd faced starvation or knew people who had.

is thwarted as the revolt in Wales makes that impossible and renders England passive before the ever-present threat on Christendom's eastern borders.

The report from Westmoreland continues his king's theme in describing the shocking and dangerous actions of the "irregular and wild Glendower," who has captured Mortimer:

> A thousand of his [Herfordshire] people butchered,
>
> Upon whose dead corpse[s]' there was such misuse
>
> Such beastly shameless transformation,
>
> By those Welshwomen. (1.1.40-5)

Henry IV's reply to Westmoreland's report sets aside plans for the Holy Land. This internal threat from the Welsh Prince, Glendower, which forestalls plans for the Crusade, includes the heinous violation of the "natural" role of women that joins the disruption of hierarchy with yet a further perversion—the "shameless transformation" of the English dead, the sort of thing that William Baldwin worries might cause divine wrath in the form of the Plague.[72] The ultimate disease visitation, Plague, arose in the east and penetrated a Christendom weakened by decades of famine and internal conflict during the first half of the fourteenth century. The juxtaposition of civil war with humoral and plague allusions and the failed plans for joining the Crusade at the beginning of *1 Henry IV* serve to frame both the stakes of the conflict that just ended (as a war internal to Christendom) as well as the coming English civil war that is the center of the play's political conflict. It is the internal threat—Glendower (as I will show below, tinged with Plague)—that disrupts the body politic and thwarts the English King's plans to join the Crusades,

[72] In William Baldwin's fantastical prose narrative *Beware the Cat* (1561), the narrator begins by describing the "lothely & abhominable sight" from his chamber overlooking Aldergate of "quarters of men … [that] do stand vp vpon Poles" This was a sight "abhominable because it is not only against nature: but against Scripture. … his [God's] wrath whould come vpon them and plague them" for such misuse of the dead (6). Rotting corpses were thought to be a potential threat of plague, as King Harry will mobilize in his threat to the French before Agincourt, to "[t]he smell" of all the English dead "whereof shall breed a plague" (4.3.102-3).

thus leaving all of Christendom weakened in its confrontation with the East. The shadow of Plague draws attention to the Ottoman east that threatens the early modern world, and in the play it does so as a consequence of disorder brought on by the irregular Welsh. If perhaps there had been less such disorder in the past, the threat of the early modern "today" might have been less or non-existent.

Added to the early Plague allusions are the significant humoral pathologies within the play,[73] the humoral language emphasizing potential internal imbalances and the threat to the sociopolitical order posed by such imbalances. The characters repeatedly refer to or describe each other in humoral terms: Hal calls Falstaff "a sanguine" "coward" (infantile, carefree, pleasure-seeking) as he and Poins spring their joke on the fat knight, and later Hal declares Falstaff's immense belly a "trunk of humors" (2.4.242; 449). The King is troubled by "blood [that] hath been too cold and temperate" (1.3.1). Hotspur is "drunk with choler" (impulsive aggression), as he rants in response to the King's rebuff and chastisement (129); his wife declares that he is "altogether govern'd by humors" (3.1.233); and Worcester says that Hotspur is "govern'd by a spleen" (5.12.19). Hotspur demonstrates the danger and the power caused by his failure to govern his own humors, and his intractability reveals how difficult it is for the state to govern such humorally-imbalanced individuals. Falstaff's humors make him what Dekker will describe as the fifth plague, "a man old in years, yet a child in discretion" ("Almanacke" sig. B4r). Both characters represent intractable challenges to governance both by the forces of order

[73] The humoral lens was "restored" to Shakespearean studies by Lily B. Campbell and John W. Draper in the 1930s and 1940s (respectively), and critics have long addressed the significance of humoral medical theory to *1 Henry IV*. U. C. Knoepflmacher considered the humoral to be the symbolic nucleus of the play, and more recently Robert L. Reid has explored the "humoral psychology" of the *Henriad*, arguing that the "four main figures of *1 Henry IV*"—the King, Hal, Falstaff, and Hotspur—"exemplify the Galenic temperaments with psychological depth and in complex oppositional relationships" (471). Humoral theory posits that humors are both set at birth and fluctuate in a cycle throughout one's life. Each person, though of one basic temper, routinely enacts the others according to the time of day, of year, of life—usually in the same sequence: *Sanguine* (morning, spring, infancy), *choleric* (afternoon, summer, youth), *phlegmatic* (evening, autumn, old age), *melancholic* (night, winter, senility) (477).

and even themselves. The world of *1 Henry IV* is a humorally disordered one, and humoral disorder renders the individual and the collective susceptible to plagues, and as the *Plague Orders* show, Elizabethan governors were concerned with exerting control during Plague outbreaks.

Within *1 Henry IV* in particular the intersection of Plague and various forms of disorder appears at significant points in the play's political narrative. Thus, part of the political agendas that may have in part shaped "sixteenth-century accounts … of the distant English past" (Logan, "Text/Events" 3) was the contemporary connection of Plague to disorder. Indeed, "Plague legislation had an enormous impact on the early modern English culture and political imaginary" (Hammill 85). Shakespeare's representation of Henry IV's reign is filled with contending authority but also conspicuously populated by the choleric Hotspur and plaguey Falstaff. The play begins with open rebellion and ends with the threat of further rebellion which indeed returns in *2 Henry IV* (Whitney, "Festivity" 410).[74] Nearly every scene seems to contain some contest, and throughout the two plays Henry IV "is plagued by" continual challenges (Kerr 98).[75] The seventeen "plague" utterances of *1 Henry IV* make it the most "plagued" of Shakespeare's plays

[74] Sickness and health, infection and humors also frame *2 Henry IV*: the play ends in a King's death, a new King's ascension, and Falstaff's banishment to die of "a sweat" (5.5.30). But from the beginning there is a difference. *2 Henry IV* begins with an infectious "rumor" that "from the orient to the drooping west" (1.1.2-3) spreads, forging a powerful analogy to the spread of Plague that continues the threat the near east poses at the beginning of *Part I*. However, Northumberland's response to the rumors is not humoral, it is Paracelsean, "In poison there is physic, / Having been well, that would have made me sick, / Being sick, have (in some measure) made me well" (137-39). The rebel's response is a medical innovation of like poison to cure like sickness rather than humoral unlike to balance sickness (too much blood, bleed, too hot, cool, etc.), but perhaps, not the correct one.

[75] As the first scene ends, Henry IV's right to Hotspur's prisoners has been denied and the stage is set for even greater challenges. Robbers rob robbers, Hal and Falstaff each take a turn playing the father/King—as if they are trying to establish who is Hal's father: Henry IV, Falstaff, or Hal himself. Certainly, Hal's slumming in Eastcheap is a challenge to his father's desire to rule his son. Scholars from Stephen Greenblatt to Valerie Traub have found within that contention both containment strategies and Bakhtinian carnival in which Falstaff seems to be both father *and* mother to Hal. Hotspur and Glendower compete over who is the greater man in 3.2, and of course the play ends in a battle with the rebels that actually leaves much unresolved as closure is denied and the end becomes the beginning of the next play (Highley 109). Falstaff is alive and prospering, Glendower is alive and free.

and, as far as I can tell, the most plagued fiction of the period.[76] Even lacking as it is in actual Plague, the play deploys the language of humoral disorder and disease, as well as new forms of governmental practice, expanding its "topical commentary" to include the relatively new *Plague Orders*. Shakespeare thereby "blur[s] the distinctions between historiography and poetry" or fiction through the play's engagement with late-sixteenth-century governmental forms and policies in relation to particular representations of medieval historical events (Logan, "Text/Events" 3). The success of Hal in his contests with Falstaff and Hotspur, which I will argue are rooted in the techniques of *The Plague Orders* and in proper humoral self-governance, in contrast to the failings of the Lord Chief Justice and the King, promotes his techniques over theirs for conquering a plagued world of disorder.

During plague outbreaks (particularly before the advent of the *Orders*), authority was significantly absent and normal economic activity ground to a halt as society to some degree ceased to function. The conflict between the Carriers and Ostler (2.2) provides the play's "plague" touchstone of standard usage of the word within the play as it highlights the plague condition of disrupted order caused by neglect of duty. The Carrier calls for the Ostler to do his job, but the common laborers' cries go unanswered—an hostler would have the means to escape during and outbreak, a carrier would not. In reply to this silence the first Carrier, cries out one last time for attention, "What, Ostler!" before declaring in frustration, "A plague on thee! …

[76] No fiction that I know of contains more uses of the word (excluding pamphlets directly addressing plague), even Nashe's piquaresque novel which is thematically framed by the English Sweating Sickness and Plague infected Rome comes close with sixteen uses. Certainly, a few of the medical texts and cure pamphlets contain more, but Holinshed's chronicles are the only non-plague text that I have found that definitively has more uses of the word. Jonson's *The Alchemist* of course occurs in plague-stricken London has just eight uses of the word; finally, often thought of as one of the most linguistically "plague"-ridden Shakespeare plays, the tragic *Timon of Athens* has four less uses than *1 Henry IV*. Admittedly, counting usages of the word "plague" is a far from thorough way of calculating how plaguey a text is or is not. However, this does contextualize the unusual promiscuity of "plague" in *1 Henry IV*—of the 115 uses of "plague" in Shakespearean drama, *1 Henry IV* and *Timon* (a significant part of my next chapter) combined account for over a quarter of them.

Come, and be hang'd! hast no faith in thee?" (2.2.27-31). In cursing the Ostler, the Carrier wishes some form of "plague" punishment upon him for his negligence.[77] The type of plague the Carrier invokes is unclear, but the motivation for the usage is quite obviously the Carrier's frustration and anger, and the word choice makes sense. Such neglect of duty as the Ostler's was a feature of The Plague outbreak, Dekker's pamphlet *London Locke back,* was written in response to the mass flight of masters from plague, Lovewit in Jonson's *The Alchemist* abandon's his place as master of his household and thus his position of command within his neighborhood and London for the safety of the country.[78] Thomas Middleton's *Your Five Gallants* also captures this absence that impedes the economy: "Away with your pawn, sir, your parish is infected! I will neither purchase The Plague for six pence in the pound and a groat bill-money, nor venture my small stock into contagious parishes. You have your answer; fare-you-well, as fast as you can, sir" (1.1.24-7). Refusing to uphold one's responsibilities was a Plague reality.

This self-quarantine in the banishment of the potentially infected, like the flight of the masters, is a well-known defense against plague. But, when the plague was widespread, such behavior emptied the political and economic space (Slack "Impact" 18, 188). This emptiness is symbolic of what Hal and the play have exposed as politically empty pre-1578 Plague world and one that, to a large degree characterizes the state of "the people at large" within the play (Miller 45). Such disorder was most pronounced during the Plague outbreak. Further, such disorder was thought to promote Plague, and was thus associated with outbreak. Without Hal's presence the

[77] This is the play's third "plague". Hotspur has just uttered his "A plague upon it"—Berkeley castle, where Richard abdicated to Henry IV, the Prince has assured the audience of his—and their—immunity to the "contagious clouds" of East Cheap, and Falstaff has invoked "plague" in attempting to avoid his debt.
[78] E.g., Dekker provides the story of the justice who refuses to do his duty at the end of the plague pamphlet, *The Wonderfull Yeare*.

hostess would go unpaid, the law would be unable to contain the disorder he has found—it seems likely that Falstaff is an old hand at escaping from the "antic" law, perhaps by martialing local sympathy to protect himself (Sharpe, "Crime" 98-99). Henry IV might want to claim that Hal's absence from court produces a similar emptiness. However, Hal's presence in Eastcheap creates order that would be lacking, if he were to leave that disorder would be unpoliced as it would have been during an outbreak—and, according to early modern medical logic, a threat to become infected with Plague. Thus, political emptiness—when the authority present was disreputably disordered as Falstaff was—was a threat to normal order since Plague might be drawn to or produced by it.[79] Finally, the Plague disorder destabilized authority and the normal modes of order within early modern society.

Thus, in the politically empty space of the pre-1578 plague-world, the Plague also marked a moment of challenge to and often of failure for the early modern English state, and the populace poses a similar problem in the play.[80] "Indeed, by its very nature early modern plague necessitated a reexamination of the relation between the individual and the social collective" (Healy, "Defoe's" 27-8). As pamphleteer John Davis notes in 1603, it is hard to "say the King doth raign / That no where, for just fear, can abide" (303-4). That is, during a Plague outbreak, when he is unable to be secure in any location, the sovereign can no longer be said to be the sovereign. Alternatively, Davis seems to suggest that if the King's deputies have "just fear" of ruling,[81] or if anyone would readily disobey the King's orders because of their greater fear of

[79] Early modern humoral theory understood disease as a manifestation of internal disorder and theorists like Thomas Lodge, imagined that miasma was drawn to the humorally disordered individuals and spaces.
[80] "Disease and politics are, in fact, inseparable. When Thomas Starkey so powerfully lamented the condition of England in the late 1520s" he used the language of decay, disease, of a social body that was suffered afflictions like a corporeal body. And, the real body's disease, decay, and death makes the social body become diseased, decay, and possibly die (Healy, "Fictions" 16).
[81] As the Justice of the Peace in Dekker's *The Wonderfull Year* who refuses to hear the case of a man brought to him by the constables (F4).

The Plague, the King does not rule. If we follow this last notion that the monarch's authority fails when subjects fear the Plague more than the sovereign, the linkage between political authority and fear becomes more appealing from a governmental perspective. The suggestion becomes that the exigencies of plague-disorder may require the monarch to rival the disease's terror and all penetrating power in order to maintain his/her rule during plague.[82] Early modern governors were directed "to cause . . . to be punished by imprisonment in such sort as may serve for a terror to others" those who did not uphold their duty (Orders 183), but this was the last step.[83] The first step was to develop another approach that, according Foucault, gives birth to widespread disciplinary power, the biopolitical concern for health, and early form of governmentality (Lemke 53; Foucault, "Discipline and Punish" 195-9; "Sexuality" 142-3; "Security" 99, 135-56, 164).[84] Hotspur and Falstaff, as conspicuously disordered subjects confronting the supremely self-controlled Prince Hal, and the play's dramatic structure requiring that the audience diagnose each character appropriately, all of which is predicated on a general shared understanding of humoral theory (enough to perform rudimentary diagnosis) and the willing practice and direction of judgement.

Key to the disciplinary order that undergirded governance during Plague was humoral medicine.[85] The *Plague Orders* counted on a collective competency for diagnosis, and humoral

[82] This poses a counter position to the cautionary notion put forward by Nashe's Rome which I described in the introduction, that the state should not match The Plague's terror.
[83] Conspicuous punishment of violators was at the magistrate's discretion, but those who were too contemptuous were to be brought before the Queen so "that there may be a more notorious sharp example made by punishment of the same by order of her Majesty" (186). In 1604 it became possible that the plague victims who carelessly jeopardized other's lives could be executed (Healy "Fictions" 39). In the early modern world with the assemblage of Plague instead of *y. pestis* "jeopardized" would've been, by definition, open to interpretation that gave the official enforcing such a rule great latitude. In effect, it could have given magistrates a license to kill if they choose to.
[84] This limited-governmentality is one of collective understanding of health and the means to contain disease (Foucault "Security" 134-56). The shared threat of plague and law comingles with the desire to survive and is informed by the state's *Orders* and magistrates judgments, humoral theory, piety to produce a shared understanding of how to respond to the disease so that the subject is not directed to participate in but wants to do so.
[85] Humoral cures form the second half of the 1578 plague orders and the dominant medical theory of the sixteenth century. By the final reprinting of the plague orders, possessed by the Folger Library, seventy years after the first,

theory was, for much of the early modern period, the popular language of health and illness (Healy, "Fictions" 24-25; Totaro "Suffering," 49).[86] Allusions to humoral medical theory that appear throughout *1 Henry IV* demonstrates how that theory produced a shared lens through which individual, community, and state health could be evaluated, discussed, and understood—and such rhetoric was most urgently deployed when the state confronted a Plague outbreak. Humor-laden rhetoric infects *1 Henry IV*, projecting the medicalized metaphor onto the political well-being of the play's state as it confronts a variety of disorders in Falstaff and the commoners who surround him, the 'riotous' (or not) prince, and the rebellious Hotspur and Glendower. The humoral language of the play is deployed to diagnose and control the play's disorders, which I will show are explicitly plagued.

As noted above, Hotspur is described by his father and uncle as choleric and sometimes ungovernable; likewise, Kate diagnoses Hotspur's humors as needing to be "govern'd" as she attempts to "treat" him (3.1.233). The other chief rebel, Glendower, is first connected to an ungoverned plague-like person by the loose association of Falstaff's exclamation when he forgets the Welshman's name, "what a plague call you him?" (2.4.339). Clearly, what is meant here is, "what *the* plague do you call him?"[87] But Falstaff's "plagues" are almost all fattened with a generative ambiguity. Syntactically "what a plague call you him?" asks both for a name

the humoral second half had been cut, the orders themselves were proceeded by refinements that defined specific offices and procedures. Within the logic of the orders, there is also the suggestion of punishment and suffering as necessary inoculation against Plague. This knowledge becomes the accepted norm by the last printing of the orders in the mid-seventeenth century as humoral theory was in the sixteenth century.

[86] Healy rejects the notion that humoral theory can be thought to have been hegemonic ("Fictions" 6-7), however Rebecca Totaro notes that before the development of alternative theories, humoral theory along with moralizing Christianity provided the broadly shared *foundation* for an understanding of health and disease (49).

[87] This "plague" comes just nine lines after the "plague of sighing and grief" line (2.4.332). In "a plague of sighing and grief," like "a plague of all cowards," that which follows the verb "of" is "a plague" that might be both the punishment as the subject of "plague", that which plagues, and those subjected to plague's punishment. Here "a plague" might be Glendower or might be his name. These uses will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

and for a designated type of plague that would appropriately characterize Glendower.[88] In one sense, it might simply be that in Falstaff Shakespeare depicts a man who cannot or carelessly refuses to restrain his "plague" language. But, this query also, unquestioningly, connects Glendower to plague, as Falstaff's previous lines connected him to another politically disruptive and humorally disrupted character, that "same mad fellow of the north, Hotspur" (2.4.334-6).

Both Falstaff and Hotspur are disordered men unable to restrain their humors; however, sanguine and self-indulgent Falstaff's plagueish nature does not offer the direct threat to the crown that Hotspur's rebellious refusal of order does. In Act 1, the King's ruling regarding the prisoners and Mortimer sends Hotspur into a "choleric" fit during which he is ungovernable and cannot be reasoned with. When he is finally calm enough to reply sensibly, they begin to hatch their plan to rebel, linking his humoral disorder with the political disorder that follows. In this exchange Hotspur links "plague" to the rebellion when he invokes it as a curse in response to his inability to remember the name of the castle (Berkeley) where Richard II surrendered to Bolingbroke: "what do you call the place?— / A plague upon it, it is in Gloucestershire" (1.3.243-4). The non-specific "plague" is more of an expression of his mood of general frustration that was, only moments before, barely within his control.[89] But he also flippantly, and perhaps somewhat terrifyingly, curses the castle with "a plague" in retaliation for it being the site where his enemy, Henry IV, seized the crown, and a place whose name he cannot remember. It is true that "a plague" is, essentially, a simple expletive expressing his frustration with his faulty memory.[90] But, again, Hotspur could have been given any number of things to say in this

[88] What is the plague in the line? Glendower? Falstaff for forgetting the name? The forgotten name? It is as if "plague" rhetorically surrounds the unnamed man *and* flows from the speaker's mouth.
[89] All rationale for Plague was superstition, it would not have been much of a leap to see this plaguing as risky.
[90] But even a modern explicative, like "damn it" gathers its power from its literal meaning. It is the metaphorical "damning" of the object of the curse. While such an explicative is not meant (necessarily) literally in everyday speech, within a literary work, it is a conspicuous choice, especially when such usage is so rare. Further, for example, if a text or figure were linked with being damned in other ways, then that "damning" would become

moment.[91] The choice of "plague" serves to emphasize the threat such a disordered man poses, while capturing that it is his own rash self-cursing humors that has made him susceptible to the disorder that threatens him and through him all of England.

In his second usage, Hotspur figuratively does just that. In 3.1, immediately after he enters and realizes that he has forgotten the map they intend to use to mark their division of the kingdom, he needlessly and in petty anger issues his second "plague" curse: "a plague upon it! / I have forgot the map," (3.1.6-7). He is wrong, as Glendower points out; the map is there. This curse targets, simultaneously, the situation of the map being forgotten and thus himself for forgetting it, but also the map itself for being forgotten. By letting his humors run amuck, by figuratively plaguing his own memory as well as the territory represented by the map of England, he plagues himself *and* becomes a plagueish threat to others, marking the potential scope of his threat. Hotspur's self-cursing situates his plaguey ungovernableness as the source of his own problems—this is a very humoral-Plague understanding, one's humoral disorders brought on the disease.

Hotspur's "plague" here is followed quickly by a series of figurative resonances with Plague causes and effects. The two rebels exchange pleasantries until Glendower calls into doubt

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decidedly conspicuous. Further, while we might say or hear "damn it" and not think of hell, it is unlikely that someone who had known someone that they watched go to hell and suffer in hell, could possibly think of the word as we do. "Plague" has lost its deadly meaning for us that it absolutely had for early moderns.

[91] Plenty of Shakespearean characters are taken with a choleric or "hot" humor, but very few of them use the word "plague" to express their mood. In fact, nine Shakespeare characters are given the word as part of a cursing epithet or as an expression of strong feeling twice or more times: Lady Margaret from *King John*, Triolus, Coriolanus, Queen Margaret (once each in *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*), Lear, Timon, Caliban, Mercutio, and Hotspur. This is a group that contains fallen aristocrats, thwarted queens, a fallen king, a rebellious slave, a dying young gentleman, and Hotspur. Laertes does not use it when threatening either Claudius or Hamlet, neither Tamara nor Titus use it though both have strong incitement to curse, and neither does the passionate Mark Anthony.
Indeed, throughout Shakespeare's plays, in most of the many, many places "plague" might be used to lament or threaten, express disdain for a villainous foe or express some other form of extreme passion another word is used. However, the man of uncontrolled humors, Hotspur, carelessly uses "plague" here and later when he thinks he has forgotten the map just before he gets into a competition with Glendower that causes both men's humors to be stirred up.

Hotspur's casual "plaguing," and before he and Hotspur forge their alliance and formulate their strategy against the King, in keeping with their imbalanced natures, they fall into a debate about who is the greater threat to the existing social, political, and natural order. The Welsh lord marks himself as some sort of strange eruption in nature, some special calamity: "At my nativity / The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes. / Of burning cressets, and at my birth / The frame and huge foundation of the earth / Shak'd like a coward" (3.1.13-17).[92] While these are the superstitious portents of disaster in general, they are also long associated with outbreaks of Plague.[93] Hotspur is unable to resist challenging Glendower's last claim, asserting that "the earth shook to see the heavens on fire, / And not in fear of your nativity" (3.1.22-3; 25-5). Hotspur continues his rebuttal on miasmic terms.

> *Diseased* nature oftentimes breaks forth
> In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth
> Is with a kind of colic pinche'd and vex'd
> By the imprisoning of unruly wind
> Within her womb, … (26-30; emphasis added)

In Hotspur's diagnosis, disease comes from an "unruly wind" that erupts from the earth's "womb" to plague humanity. In Davies' descriptions of miasma, which explicitly connects human sin causally to foul air, and thus to Plague, he characterizes sinners as plagues and situates Plague as a mechanism for containing human transgression—but not a successful one: "[Plague] That glutts the Aire with Vapors venemous,/ That puttrifie, infect, and flesh confound/

[92] Not to make too much of this moment, but Hotspur's map is presumably of either all of England or a large part of it, and his curse has figuratively "plagued" this representation of English territory.
[93] Defoe describes how these sorts of things might be interpreted as engendering plague (25).

… For, they the purest Aire did defile" into a miasma, that "This all-confounding Pestilence began" (222, 230).

That Aire, and Earth, that do such plagues relive

What are those men but plagues, that plague by men

All men are such, that teach sin in effect;

And all do so, that sine but now and then,

If now and then they sinne, in overt act.

What can containe us, if these plagues cannot. (240; emphasis added)

Davies' poem thus provides a connection between the figurative language of the *1 Henry IV*, which resonates with miasmic causes of plague, and the 'sins' or rebellious transgressions of men like Glendower and Hotspur, who can be understood as "plagues" *and* potential causes of The Plague. Hotspur, at pains to discount Glendower's strange eruptive unnaturalness, is intent on claiming himself to be the greatest disorder or plague upon Henry IV. They seem in part to prefigure John Davies' 1603 claim that The Plague usurps the throne, as they each seek to be the one who is the greatest "plague"-like man, and thus the most powerful, most sovereign threat—a connection addressed in chapter four. The confrontation ends when Mortimer interrupts and turns the choleric humors of Hotspur and Glendower from "this unprofitable chat" to the topic of war with the crown (62). The choleric humors of the two men, which causes the "plague[y]" or "strange eruption" of their irregular ungovernable natures, can find the most profit in rebellion and war.

Interestingly, the rebel cause is exposed as particularly vulnerable to "infection" when the Senior Percy is sickened and cannot join the fight against Henry IV. His sickness is called a "leisure" "In such a justling time" of rebellion" (17-18), suggesting a willful idleness rather than

a debilitation. Later, Hotspur notes that "This sickness," of his father's, "doeth infect / The very life-blood of our enterprise / 'Tis catching hither, even to our camp" (29-31). But though his "father's sickness is a maim" to the cause, they have no choice but to proceed, according to Hotspur, for the King undoubtedly knows their intentions (29-41). Worchester recognizes the infectious nature of this information that may "breed a kind of question in our cause," and Hotspur proposes to go on as if "yet all our joints are whole" and un-plagued by doubt even though this development has turned the tides of war in the King's favor (60-83; 4.4.14).[94] Shortly after, Vernon sings Hal's praises and Hotspur silences him, "No more, no more! Worse than the sun in March, / This praise doth nourish agues" of doubt (97-112).[95] Hal, as a new sort of order, threatens the rebels, breeds a kind of healthy-sickness that disrupts Hotspur's disordered cause while simultaneously promoting the state's order.[96]

By infecting imbalanced Hotspur's humoral language with the taint of "plague" and disease the play associates him with something unmistakably dangerous beyond war. Hotspur, difficult to contain and cure, is unpredictable and powerful, like a force of nature. His choleric humors unbalance him, and mark him as unruly, reversing the King's early contrast between his apparently wayward son and this supposed paragon of noble youth (1.1.85-90). Hotspur's humors are choleric in the extreme, while Prince Hal actually shows no signs of imbalance, despite his seemingly rebellious nature.[97] Hal is obedient to his own rule, his father's order when

[94] Of course un-"whole" or unhealthy joints that are swollen are a potential sign of plague, as the lymph nodes swell in the groin and armpit.

[95] Ague is a sickness that Hotspur imagines coming with the warming of Spring, as plague often did.

[96] In one sense this might be a Paracelsian like to cure like, which I will discuss in chapter two, where the source of order, Hal, becomes infectious and disease-like to defeat the plaguish Falstaff and Hotspur. On the other hand, this language of infecting seems to be part of the general political language of the play, as the King's description of his rise to power that he shares with Hal in 3.2.

[97] At no point in the three plays of which he is at the center does Hal show an emotion that is beyond the control of his reason, he threatens it before Harfleur and perhaps teeters on the edge of it when confronting the traitors. But even then Henry does not lose control as Hamlet seems to do at points, as Timon does from beyond the walls of

necessary, willing to pay the "charity" of the bill when it is due in East Cheap and eventually to pay the debt he "never promised" in becoming king. By contrast, Hotspur is disobedient to Henry IV's order and, at times, even his own. Hotspur is uninterested in paying his debts of duty and loyalty but adamant about receiving payment for debts/rewards owed to him. Nevertheless, Hotspur's charisma ensures that he is both "plague" threat and a sympathetic but necessary sacrifice on the altar of order that "represent[s] on an individual scale the tragedy of a terrible and unstoppable process" of war and revolution, of heroism and death (MackEnzie 202-3), *and*, I argue, of plague and loss. There is little triumph in the moment of Hotspur's death because, even though Hal is confirmed as the better heir apparent by the act of killing Hotspur, such losses to humoral imbalance are tragedies.

However, while Hotspur may be the chief rebel, he is not the chief plague and source of disorder in the play. Hotspur's rebellion, to some degree, helps the state to organize itself (Efron), as perhaps The Plague did by prompting the production of *The Plague Orders*. This "remarkable achievement, the development of a strategy for an active war against plague," by the mid to late 1630s had given governors the confidence to believe that Plague, perhaps one of humanity's greatest foes, had been subdued (Slack, "Impact" 46, 240); although, this confidence would be sorely tested in 1665. Since plague was intimately tied to the unruly among the lower orders, this belief suggests a level of confidence in early modern governors' ability to order the poor during a visitation, containing plagued and Plague alike.

Athens, or as the mob in *Julius Caesar* does after Anthony stirs them up. Hal is a very controlled social performer (Roche 25) who, perhaps, has much in common with Bret Easton Ellis's Patrick Bateman.

SECTION II: The "plague [that] hangs over us"

In the early seventeenth century, Middleton set out to write in the newly popular genre of plague pamphlets, perhaps seeking the alternate source of revenue his frequent collaborator Dekker had found. One of the first cultural touchstones he invoked, as Charles Whitney notes, was Shakespeare's famously fat, intemperate, sinning, and, thus (by Davies' logic) plaguing knight ("Pamphlets" 211).[98] At the end of Middleton's pamphlet, *Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinarie*, the host, the "great-grandson" of Sir John Oldcastle, cheerily encourages his listeners not to dwell on the cautionary tales of bad behavior during Plague-time that they had just heard, but instead, to "wash all these tales in a cup of sack" (sig. D3r).[99] Clearly, the figure was meant to evoke Shakespeare's Sir John, indicating that Falstaff/Oldcastle was strongly associated with Plague for early modern readers. In the play, Falstaff's fourteen spoken "plagues" repeatedly put the word in the air, so to speak. In this section, I will explore how Falstaff attempts to make plague his ally, the ways in which he is "plaguey," and how the play makes it clear that he, *as such*, is a necessary object of the crowned prince's direct governance.

Falstaff's first usage, "What a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?" (1.2.45-6), richly illustrates the many aspects of plague, and is only slightly "unfixed" in its meaning, unlike some of his latter uses. Objecting to the consequences of his unpaid debts—represented by the

[98] Plague writing existed since almost the first appearance of The Plague in 1347. However, the genre received a boost in popularity in England after the 1603 plague outbreak in London. This is in part thanks to Thomas Dekker's exploration of the topic. But also due to the severity of that particular outbreak, which lingered for some years and had followed "hard upon" the 1593 outbreak that had ended the thirty years of relative dormancy; also, the fact that playwrights with their flare for drama needed to make a living helped promulgate the genre (Barroll 17, 106, 109-12). While Dekker was the chief plague pamphleteer, Middleton was a frequent collaborator.
As Joan Fitzpatrick notes, Oldcastle/Falstaff would have been readily identified the sinner the 1563-1571 "Homily against Gluttony and Drunkenness" sought to correct (5). It is useful to know that "plague" appears frequently in the homilies, including two in "Gluttony and Drunkenness", however, while none clearly invoke The Plague rather the many "plagues" of God (87), Falstaff might have been considered one of these plagues.

[99] These are the pamphlet's last words closing the frame that begins with a grim debate between the catastrophic alien triumvirate of Pestilence, Famine, and War with an all too human response with sack.

Hostess' bill—Falstaff invokes "plague" in a gesture to his own social condition of poverty as a sort of plague, the one Dekker will later label Saint Paulus' plague. This first "plague" is kin to the later "plague" in 2.4—that of his being brought up on charges (497). In each, he is trying to avoid a reckoning. Further, in using "plague" in this moment, not exactly a situation filled with pathos, Falstaff might seem to be irreverently minimizing the Plague. If he were, he would be doing so in a historical setting (the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century) when the Plague was no small threat, and on a stage with an audience that were themselves at most a few years removed from the most recent major plague visitation in London. It is one thing to use plague in a moment of high emotion—as Constance does in *King John* when expressing her anger and desperation at the turn of events against her son, using the word five times in just eight lines (*King John* 2.1.184-90). But, Falstaff's "plague" exclamations create an escalation of disorder. His startlingly flippant use of "plague" to evade a debt that he clearly owes resonates, in a much more serious register, with the deep anxiety felt by those who viewed disordered behaviors of people like Falstaff as a potential source of Plague. Infectiously funny and charming, the fat old knight is *also* a potentially terrifying, disordered site of contagion (Fisher 6).

By invoking "a plague," Falstaff produced the possibility of the Plague disorder beyond the containment ability of the early modern political order. Falstaff has mobilized the plague to protect himself from debt while suggesting that general disorder protects him from the buff jerkins and the law, which he subsequently dismisses as "the rusty curb," an "old father" that is "antic the law" (1.2.61). However, this passage ends with Falstaff's lobbying the future king to protect thieves like him from hanging. As the 1563 *Plague Orders* show, the law, as Hal to some degree seems to corroborate, is severely limited. Just as traditional law and order could not hope to thwart The Plague, normal law seems also essentially ineffective against Falstaff, despite his

fear of the possible punishment. Faced with the greater likelihood of the "buff jerkin" wearing jailors of the debtors' prison (in which he would face some risk of starving to death), Falstaff's disorder escalates as he chooses to take his chances of being caught (risking execution) and perform the nighttime robbery.[100] Antic law threatens Falstaff either way, and he seems inured to the threat. This external force of order fails to alter Falstaff's behavior, and so, as I shall argue in the next section, Hal's method of governance is predicated on self-correction and willing sacrifice. Although it fails with Falstaff, at least Hal has recognized the fallen knight's disorder using the strategies of infiltration and surveillance and attempts to contain the recalcitrant Falstaff.

Shakespeare frames Falstaff's first "plague" usage with striking rhetorical deftness: Plague is a punishment for general sin unfairly endured by the individual, regardless of their culpability. Falstaff's plagued objection powerfully and cleverly gets at the central dilemma of the tavern bill (and The Plague *and* perhaps the general condition of being impoverished). His reply to the Prince essentially asks why he should have to face that bill-plague alone. However, as the misruling local leader, Falstaff is undoubtedly the most responsible for the size of the "reckoning" that the community of drinkers has incurred.[101] Hal recognizes the rhetorical trick of plaguing his association with the bill and corrects Falstaff's diagnosis in his answer by alluding to Falstaff's disordered lifestyle, "Why, what a *pox* have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?" (1.2.47; emphasis added). In turning 'plague' to 'pox', Hal substitutes the plague logic of

[100] Though, after the robbery the sheriff follows the "hue and cry" to the Boarshead, Falstaff and company retreats there without the loot, and if the sheriff were to search for evidence that they are the thieves he'd find none; unless Hal and Poins have brought the money back. Hence, Hal's sending the Sheriff away is, in part, for his own benefit rather than simply protecting Falstaff.

[101] The inference, in terms of the politics of plague or the official transcript of this readings is that local leaders are most responsible for the disorder among the poor because it is their "poor" leadership that had engendered the plague punishment and thus the arduous and dangerous expectations placed upon them by the orders might deserve charity but not sympathy. Indeed, punishment for officials that refused their duty during plague were decidedly harsh, potentially including execution (Slack, "Responses" 125).

inscrutable causation, general sin, and collective punishment that capriciously strikes some but not others with the logics of a disease with a clear cause, a singular sin, and the transgressive-individual's suffering alone for that sin.[102] Further, Hal goes on to remind Falstaff that, when Hal paid the bill, he never "call[ed] for thee to pay thy part," to which Falstaff is forced to agree that he "hast paid all there" (49-52). Hal has made individual restitution for collective pleasure, and now, he says, it is Falstaff's turn, as the local leader, to do his part, even if it is risky.[103] Falstaff's "plague" marks an immediate attempt to obfuscate his relationship to the hostess' bill that Hal's pox rejoinder cures through his "proper diagnosis".

In essence, Hal has established the proper economic order of paid debts and ultimately purged the political order *as well as* the dramaturgical order by settling the nerves of any audience members who might have been startled by the reminder of "plague" with a quick laugh at the bawdy "pox." Further, the "pox" declares Falstaff's sinful nature in contrast to the Prince's, who asks "what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?" To which Falstaff notes that Hal had paid the "reckoning many a time and oft" (47-50). The Prince's assertion that he has "donated" to the cause overcomes Falstaff's initial objection: it is Falstaff's disordered nature that has caused his "plague" and while Hal has given charitably to help mitigate the consequences, in the end Falstaff must pay.[104] Further, within the official transcript of Plague, Falstaff's usage of plague is incorrect: as the disordered poor, he is both cause and thus

[102] Although "pox" appears much less frequently in Shakespeare than "plague" (twenty-one and one hundred and twelve times respectively), it has nevertheless been a popular concept—as the significant amount of scholarship of venereal disease in Shakespeare shows. While far newer to Europeans than plague, pox represents both a similar affliction, in that it was tied to sin, and very different disease that is quite clearly related to a specific sin—and, of course it is also far less deadly than plague and consequently often a source of humor. Nevertheless, pox represents disordered behavior that was always thought to risk worse plagues.

[103] Similarly, magistrates take turns doing their duty to the community as local governors, a requirement of particular importance during plague outbreaks. Failure to do one's duty could lead to severe punishment when the *Orders* were in effect.

[104] Falstaff's later claim that Hal has led him astray might be rather dubious, but doubtlessly the possibilities the Prince represented might have added fuel—in the form of future possibilities—to Falstaff's disordered existence.

deservedly punished by Plague. "In 1543 the [Privy] Council pinned the responsibility for infection firmly on the disorders of the infected"; poor victims of the Plague were never blameless and though they should be pitied and aided, in the end it was they who had invoked judgment and must endure the punishment (Slack "Impact" 203). The Prince's "pox" and explanation that he has paid as much as he can forces Falstaff to accept the logic that the bill-"plague" is his to pay.

Further, Hal's diagnosis is not just of the bill and Falstaff's attempt to avoid it here, but is preceded by a general discussion of Falstaff's lifestyle as one who "take[s] purses by the moon" (1.2.14). Falstaff counters the notion that he is ungoverned or disordered by claiming that they who are like him are in fact "men of good government, being / govern'd, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress / the moon, under whose countenance we steal" (26-9). Hal responds wryly that, indeed, such a life "doth ebb / and flow like the sea, being govern'd as the sea is, by the / moon" (31-3) with want of money that is no sooner gotten than spent until the tide that began at "the foot of the ladder, … [comes] in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows" (38-9). Hal has complicated Flastaff's claim about the moon's governance by seeing the deeper cycle it creates and warning that it ends at the "the gallows." Rather than showing alarm, Falstaff agrees with the Prince, then makes what might be some sort of insinuation: "And is not / the hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?" But Hal rebukes Falstaff's insinuation with one of his own about the "buff jerkin" jailors of the debtors prison (43).[105] So, the question of the bill is not just about the money owed, but the lifestyle or "condition" that has put Falstaff under choice of

[105] Falstaff's insinuation here, as with many of the double-entendres in the play, is meant to remind the Prince that Hal and the Knight have "heard the chimes at midnight" (*2 Henry IV* 3.2.214) as Falstaff and Justice Shallow have heard them together. However, the Prince is not a justice, but the future king and has already declared that he will "banish all the world"; in fact, "I *do*, I will" (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.479-80; emphasis added) that he has (historically) already banished the world the characters on stage with him represent, even as he keeps company with them (and the audience).

facing the surer threat of jailors or possible threat of hanging (63), even as his use of "plague" hints at the even greater threat his lifestyle creates for others.

For a theater full of people who had endured the recent devastation of a Plague outbreak, this initial false note provides an early allusion to the darker aspects of Falstaff's character than conventional theater wisdom seems to accept.[106] If Falstaff "is the play's emotional core" (Evans 53), then it is a "plague" infected core that an early modern audience might have both loved and feared. His first words are witty and fascinating, meant to charm and amuse as his good nature accepts Hal's joke about his size and shape: "come roundly, roundly" the Prince says, urging Falstaff to explain himself, which he does by slyly defending his "moon-governed" life against the judgment of his audience. However, in the early modern English humoral-political world, Falstaff's personal intemperance was also political (Fisher 8). He is one of the "minions of the moon": a man "of the shade" (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.26.9) outside of the bright order produced by the monarchical sun. The "plagues" from this self-serving and disorderly figure produce dark allusions to a deadly, terrifying power, one that challenges the authority of kings, producing a note in a different key than anything else Falstaff or Hal have said up to this point. This dark note is inherent to the early modern view of such an intemperate potential source of disease, and

[106] This perception of Falstaff is not just found in popular productions of the play like the 2012 Royal Shakespeare adaptation in which, indeed, Falstaff's first "plague" is left out, as it often is, and Falstaff is essentially a jolly, drunken, whoring, and thieving bad Santa Claus like figure; indeed, Simon Russell Beale's Falstaff in the BBC *Hollow Crown* TV version is a strikingly far more dark and ominous character. As Ellen Caldwell notes the darkness of Falstaff has been swept up into "the carnivalesque reading popularized" by Michael Bristol (*Carnival and Theatre: Plebian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England*) and Valerie Traub ("Prince Hal's Falstaff: Positioning Psychoanalysis and the Female Reproductive Body") in the mid to late 1980s (Caldwell 219). Others have followed this reading that renders Falstaff as possibly "skeptical … towards Hal" (Rubinstein 288) or "promulgating a generalized 'skepticism,' rather than a criticism of the State and its value" (Efron 13) but never a serious threat. Indeed, Falstaff seems to take nothing serious and is a sort of comic inhuman according to Joseph Roach (28), or put another way, he is not to be taken too seriously. However, where Meredith Evans finds a skeptical effort that is the "radical attenuation of "individual virtue" (39) I also find a potential plaguey-monster all the more terrifying precisely because he is not simply a monster.

cannot be entirely benign, not in a theater filled with people who believed in humoral medicine and had probably all lost someone to the Plague's painful, abrupt, and capricious death.[107]

It is the collective weight of Falstaff conspicuous "plagues"—used so *many* more times than any other Shakespearean character—that most clearly mark *1 Henry IV* as a plague text. Falstaff's first "plague" concerning "buff jerkins" is easily associated with the types of "plague" relating to debt.[108] This sort of connection is not the case with his later usages. Falstaff's "plague" is often unmoored and loose among its many potential meanings *and* many potential causes.[109] After the robbery, Falstaff uses "plague" as a somewhat deterritorialized sign that is not attached to any recognizable plague meaning. For instance, returning to the moment when Falstaff forgets Glendower's name and asks, "what a plague call you him?" (2.4.339), the "plague" of his question resists precise denotation, and instead welcomes the polysemous and disordered nature of the word. Similarly, Falstaff's "a plague of all cowards" (2.4.114-70)—

[107] The 1593 plague in London was probably the least severe of the major outbreaks of the 102 years span from 1563 to the last Great Plague of London in 1665. 1665 was probably the second least severe. However, both 1593 and 1665 occurred after extended periods of general plague remission and must have been more terrifying because of it. Shakespeare's audience, made up of mostly the middling and lower sort, would have experienced 14.3% percent mortality. Of the nearly 18,000 burials at least 11,000 were plague burials (Slack "Impact*"* 151). These figures cannot be easily adjusted for the number of Londoners who managed to flee from the plague. However, we can suspect that it represents a significant underestimate of the mortality rate that confronted the poor who were forced to remain in London as the disease raged in their more cramped neighborhoods (Slack, "Impact" 167). It is likely that everyone in the theater would have known several people who had died of plague and probably someone who had died of it in the last outbreak, they would likely have known of households from which no one had survived. It is important to remember that deaths of plague, unlike most other deaths, was swift but painful and almost always untimely—the old often survived, but the young did not (Slack, "Impact" 183). Plague deaths left unnatural holes in the community. Finally, following Donne's description of the early modern understanding of health, Plague would have marked a persistent potential threat to Shakespeare's audience (Gilman 36**)**.

[108] The "buff-jerkin" (jailor's uniform) usage Falstaff seems to be suggesting what Dekker will later call the "Blacke Plague" of an aggressive creditor.

[109] Falstaff's essentially standard usages of plague occur in close succession just before the robbery. Foreshadowing the Poins rob-the-robbers plot that the audience knows about, Falstaff complains "a plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another!" (2.2.27-8) as he wanders about looking for his fellows in the dark. The "plague" is evocative of danger, death, disorder, unsavory burials in the night, and both law's overreach and its frequent failure. These connotations heighten the tension of the moment and serve to transmit Falstaff's nervousness. Likewise, his relief after finding his friends in the next line, "Whew! A plague upon you all!" is another simple usage of the word, the "plague" is unclear, but syntactically its relationship to its object is very clear and more friendly than hostile. In contrast, his next use six lines later, "What a plague mean ye to colt me thus?" is once again, more like his usual awkwardly ambiguous usage of the word. He rejects his treatment by his friends and uses an indiscriminate and indistinct "plague" to express his displeasure (37).

repeated five times—may mean that cowards are a "plague," that Falstaff is cursing cowards with some sort of "plague," or that cowards already suffer a particular coward's "plague."[110] Syntactically, the indefinite "a" that precedes "plague," and the "of" that leads to the noun-phrase "all cowards," leave the meaning unclear. The phrase does not clearly wish *a* plague *on* or *upon* "all cowards," nor does it simply indicate that there is a plague specific to cowards, nor that cowards are a form of plague; instead all three possible meanings circulate. The "*a* plague" as a signifier floats above its many potential meanings in Falstaff's general usage of the word, as frequently it is syntactically adrift.[111] Falstaff's figurative uses are like lenses that draw attention to plague's mobile and opaque nature. Like a contagious agent, Falstaff's "plague" is an invisible threat echoing across the stage.

In its abundance of association, it is radically dynamic without a clear target or a distinct source. "A plague of all cowards" at once threatens Hal and Poins, who failed to do their part in the robbery, and testifies to the "suffering" of Falstaff left to rob without the Prince and Poins. He draws attention to the cowardice of his social superior, but Plague, a threat to all, marks another deft usage of the word by Falstaff, as his "plague of all cowards" at once diffuses and gives force to his accusation against the Prince. He offers a threat that none can defeat while threatening no one in particular. Finally, the grammatically ambiguous "plague" begins to function as a sort of logical fulcrum in his speech, its ambiguity acts as the pivot point of Falstaff's falsity.

[110] Fastaff, as Joseph Roache notes, is many things (32), one of them quite clearly is a coward.
[111] As I have noted, his nearly every use of "a plague" is done without a specific type delineated after "of." Only three times is his usage, relatively straight-forward: "a plague upon you both," "a plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one on to another," and "a plague upon you all! Give me my horse," (2.2.20-1, 27-29). His other uses are thick with ambiguity.

That Falstaff, the one cursing cowards with "plague" *or* perhaps complaining that he is plagued by cowards, is the actual coward seems to capture the hypocrisy of the *Plague Orders*; as Ellen Caldwell notes, this is often seen as a function of Falstaff: the one who "ironically often [is] the very man who spies hypocrisy" (223).[112] The accusation against the upper levels of the English government (the crowned Prince and his "deputy") for failure to uphold their "duty" by not participating in the night robbery—an accusation tainted with plague (both "plague" and Falstaff as a source of Plague)—echoes the sentiment that Dekker will capture decades later in his *Rod for Runaways*. Dekker writes for his "fellow-Sufferers in London" to "Masters of Riches" and their neighbors who "have beene frighted, and fled out of the City" ("Rod" B2). The indistinct "A plague of all cowards" produces the resentment Dekker captures of those who are able to flee from danger leaving the lower orders to face Plague alone.[113] However, since Hal and Poins were *not* cowards—after all, they did perform a robbery—the play turns back this potential critique of "cowardly" flight by those Dekker will later call "Masters of Riches" through Falstaff's "plague of all cowards." Instead, this moment posits the possibility that those of greater social status who might seem to be cowards, are not actually cowards but have a deeper plan than those who might curse them perceive—as Poins and Hal do in the robbery subplot. Hal's plan extends beyond the robbery trick Poins proposes: the Prince plans to the secure the fallen knight a commission and thus an opportunity in the coming war, *and* he plans to pay back the robbed money. This further plan effectively corrects Falstaff's robbery mistake and improves

[112] Though the true hypocrisy of the play comes in the form of the double-entendre play between Falstaff and Hal that suggest that Hal is little better than Falstaff, that really only the royal title is what distinguishes them. This is a hypocrisy that is a concern of a larger project.
[113] This sentiment is found in Dekker's *A Rod for Run-Awayes, London Looke Backe*, of course, and as well in his depiction of the Justice at the end of *Wonderfull Year* who refuses to do his duty.

his condition by giving him an income with which he can pay his debt-plagues. Falstaff, of course, corrupts the course of this plan.

Hal's plan for "correcting" Falstaff's disorder is aimed at ending the disordered Knights need, erasing his debt, giving him a source of income, and a chance to earn glory. With *The Plague Orders* the governors' goal was to produce order to "stay further increase of" plague ("Orders" 180) regardless of the necessary casualties, which included the lives of those who are plagued as well as the usual mechanisms of order (Slack "Impact" 103), or the usual loyalty between neighbors—*or*, in this case, robbers. The logic of the official transcript is founded upon the conviction that the poor who faced Plague were the cause of that disorder. This was of course hotly contested by the governed; for example, Thomas Moulton puts the blame squarely on the leaders of English society for failing to govern well (Bj-1). However, Sir John Falstaff, as a fallen knight, should be a source of order but is instead a source of disorder, *except*, comically in this attempt to correct those in his "disordered" group who failed to commit robbery. He is both the "plague" the leaders fear and the local leader that the poor should fear. His "governance"—if you will—like Hal's, which I will discuss in the next section, resembles the *Plague Orders*. He sets out to make Hal and Poins' disorder visible for all to see—the first steps in managing an infection for *The Plague Orders*. In particular, Hal and Poins fail to uphold their duty and Falstaff is "punishing" them conspicuously for it: "A plague of all cowards" he repeats five times, publicly creating an accusation of cowardice that Falstaff does not quite level at Hal and Poins. This is "item 3" of the *Orders*, conspicuously correct those who fail to do their duty so they "may serve for a terror to others" (182). However, Falstaff is not just a bad example, but a bad governor and his correction is against those who failed to break the law. Thus, he is the double source of plague as the disordered individual who creates the conditions for Plague and

the leader at fault for governing his community so that they are susceptible to Plague. Having the disordered and cowardly Falstaff use the "plague" and the disciplinary technique of the *Orders* this way to try to correct his ungoverned group suggests a skepticism towards the techniques of the *Orders* and/or those enforcing them, as well as perhaps doubt in the effort to enforce order in the midst of plague.[114] However, coming from Falstaff, who demonstrates the ability and willingness to "govern" in this moment, "A plague of all cowards" expands the hypocrisy of plaguing Falstaff who, according to both 1543 Privy Council and Thomas Moulton, deserves to face The Plague.

Indeed, Falstaff embodies disorder in a way that renders him a potential *source* or *cause* of Plague. Throughout *1 Henry IV* the intemperate Knight's usage of "plague" implicitly relies upon the notion that there are many types of plague, such as the condition of being in debt, or worse facing a creditor aggressively trying to collect a debt, or of being a disordered foolish old man (Dekker, "Almanacke" sig. B5r). Falstaff does more than fill the play with plague by association. The Plague was thought to be delivered by God through miasma and disordered natural events, and disordered bodies (individual and state) that were not just susceptible to plague but potential sources of contagion, according to prominent plague-theorist Thomas Lodge (B2v). On the state level, all forms of socio-political disorder threatened the stability of the English city and state.[115] Plague was one affliction among many that posed a potential threat to the early modern English socio-political order and many other "afflictions" or conditions were thought to create the nation's or city's susceptibility to Plague. Thus, by invoking and

[114] Much as Dogberry of *Much Ado about Nothing* represents a significant skepticism of the local constable even in the face of his success (Spinrad), having Falstaff represent any aspect of the *Plague Orders* is hardly a strong endorsement.

[115] By masterless men and women wandering out of service, criminal activity, riot and dearth, factional infighting of the nobility, Catholicism, and other treasons.

embodying other, lesser or gateway plagues or plague concept—such as those that Dekker categorizes in *The Ravens Almanacke*—in Falstaff, Shakespeare produces a parallel threat to the "health" of the English state.[116]

While Hotspur embodies and enacts the major form of figurative plague in this play—that of the disordered and rebelling nobility—curing this disorder is relatively straightforward: the state (Hal) must kill Hotspur and defeat the rebels. Dealing with the other disorder, that of the commons of Eastcheap in the figure of Jack Falstaff, poses an entirely different sort of problem. Scholars see Falstaff as the rebellious threat to Kingship, an example to and reflection of those commoners who shirk their duty and pursue illegal or immoral pastimes and endeavors. He is thus a grotesque and contagious source of disorder (Efron 35; Pasupathi 349; Kerr 99; Whitney, "Festivity" 422; Caldwell). He readily fits Dekker's fifth "plague of Saint Tronions": an old man who carries on like an unwise youth; Falstaff also resembles the "devil" that a good man keeps company with in Dekker's last and "most heavy" figurative disorder, "God's plague" ("Almanacke" B5). It quickly becomes clear that traditional law and enforcement practices have little effect on Falstaff. However, this captain of the gang of commoner thieves represents a necessary component of the English State—as the raising of troops in *2 Henry IV* shows. Falstaff and crew are the disordered, out-of-service, masterless commonality that, as some scholars have suggested, must be brought under the yoke of English law and service (Greenblatt, "Negotiations" 43).[117] However, in the *Henry IV* sequence the upstanding middling (yeoman and petty nobility) master class (the likes of Gower and Fluellen of *Henry V* or the Boatswain of

[116] As Totaro describes plague was certainly an influential framework for utopian literature that produced idealized societies. These "no places" accounted for plague or sickness: "In Thomas More's *Utopia* the inhabitants control the plague; it does not control them" (15, 17), and the inhabitants of Francis Bacon's new Atlantis are so concerned with plague sickness that after the desolation of the ocean, his explorers are quarantined upon their arrival to the strange land that also gives great attention to good health (457-62).

[117] Indeed, Falstaff should be keeping the Bardolphs and Petos of the world from lawlessness not leading them in their descent into debauchery.

Tempest), are absent from the stage. *1 Henry IV* traverses the territory between palace halls and debauched inn of Bardolphs, Petos, and Pistols with essentially nothing in between except Falstaff.[118] The effect of the juxtaposition produces frequent political disorientation as for a moment, the reprobate Falstaff is even able to fictionally usurp the throne in the presence of the crowned prince (2.4).

SECTION III: Containing Plague and "Plagues"

Falstaff becomes visible as a source of disorder when the Prince persists in spending his time in Eastcheap and the Boarshead. This is the Prince's first step, as it was for the Justices charged with responding to the plague: investigate the source of disorder ("Orders" 2). The current section traces the Prince's effort to inspect, make visible, and ultimately contain Falstaff's plagueishness by describing Hal's techniques and their similarities to the plague-control methods, and explains the significance of Falstaff and Hal in terms of the official transcript of the relationship between disorder and plague. All plagues were, to a greater or lesser extent, transgressive, unruly, infectious, disordering, and "ills that affect the community as a whole and threaten or seem to threaten the very existence of social life" (Girard 138). Through Falstaff, Shakespeare invents a form of plague usage that syntactically sets "plague" loose on the English language, as if, in Falstaff, Shakespeare is inventing a unique kind of plague. For Shakespeare and his audience, intemperate people like Falstaff and disordered places like the Boarshead were potential reservoirs of Plague.

In the *Henry IV* plays, beyond the context of Eastcheap, Falstaff's misrule in his mustering of troops shows how his antics might undermine the sovereign's ability to suppress

[118] The Sheriff provides the few lines of exception, the Lord Chief Justice is certainly of a higher rank, in part 2 the country Justices Shallow and Silence, along with Sergeants Fang and Snare join Falstaff in the middle.

rebellion or potentially confront external threats (4.2; *2 Henry IV* 3.2; Pasupathi 339-340, 346). It seems that for Hal (and Shakespeare) this otherwise almost invisible plaguish figure haunting the margins of society is a threat that must be overcome even as the King faces open revolution and war. The play thus implicitly links these two diverse threats to early modern order. As Elizabeth's own government admitted in the 1563 *Plague Orders*, during Plague outbreaks the law was essentially absent, as it was in Falstaff and the Carrier's world ruled by disorder that was unimpressed by "antic law." In times of Plague before 1563, local governance was the rule (Slack, "Impact" 204). Even after 1578, the orders only worked if most people willingly participated and the local magistrates (at least) obeyed the orders. In the new more expansive *Plague Orders* of 1578 the government tried to imagine that during Plague outbreaks, Elizabethan governors, justices, and magistrates would, instead of being absent, have their most penetrating effect—albeit not in their usual modes.[119] This greater penetration would function as a check on The Plague at precisely the moment when normal law had essentially failed, as it failed to contain Falstaff.

The basic goal of human Plague governance in England after the adoption of the 1578 *Plague Orders* was to create a system which would ensure that Plagued locations were governed during an outbreak, a response to The Plague that took the form of new practices of oversight and intervention.[120] The *Plague Orders* followed three key techniques to accomplish the goal of establishing governance. First, they directed magistrates to identify the sites of infection. Second, the *Orders* offered punishment for those who refused to do their duty or comply with the

[119] Thus, "plague" is both connotative of disorder *and* of greater governance.
[120] As Robert Cecil's first draft claims, plague outbreaks essentially and ended temporarily the normal forms of governance. Judging by the reaction to quarantine that emerged in the early seventeenth century, it can safely be accepted that Cecil's 1563 claim about the lack of government during plague was no longer true during later outbreaks.

governors. Finally, the *Orders* sought to contain the infected. Quarantine, as a form of containment, both made the Plagued visible, as households were conspicuously marked with red crosses or bales of hay (*Orders* 183-4), and also hid the Plagued and thus Plague suffering and death within that house. This practice, like burying the dead and sunset or sunrise, marks a double-effort of the *Orders* to hide the effects of the disease and simultaneously make the infected visible as objects of government and as an abject reminder to the general population of why they should support the efforts of magistrates. The *Orders* relied upon participation: Justices of the Peace had to do their part willingly, as did local magistrates, but additionally, the afflicted were required to self-report, or their neighbors were expected to report them—so surveillance was a central aspect of the first goal. In response to outbreak, victims and whole families were expected to accept their quarantine, not as punishment of a crime, but for the protection of the healthy and the benefit of the collective good. When the *Orders* failed to produce willing cooperation, the *Orders* provided for restraining and making examples of offenders or removing them to Westminster for severe punishment, thereby asserting legal authority, fostering fear of reprisals, and limiting targeted subjects' ability to foment resistance.[121] *Plague* law required, as Foucault notes ("Discipline" 195-9), a proactive observant disciplinary society, collective concern for health, and a shared knowledge about how to achieve general health.[122]

The play confronts disorders that can be linked to the Plague, as embodied in key characters like Hotspur and Falstaff. It does this, I argue, through Hal who demonstrates new ways of creating order that are predicated upon the proactive and invasive investigation of sites of social disorder, and upon the expectation that the governed would participate in proactive

[121] Gilman describes the psychotic theology that is at the heart of English understandings of the disease ("Writing" 64-5), but there is also, certainly a bit of psychotic authority at the heart of early modern English *Plague Orders*: obedience meant potentially be exposed to death.
[122] As I describe in the second section.

control practices, with severe exemplar punishments for the unwilling few. In *Being and Having in Shakespeare,* Katherine Maus argues that the second tetralogy engages with different property relationships—those of land and chattel (respectively)—in order to define a new sense of the sovereign self, detached from mere title and succession; this is a definition, she argues, that Prince Hal embraces (4, 54, 130). However, she stops short of investigating Hal's governing practices as part of this new form of sovereignty. I agree that the play reframes the relationships and practices of sovereignty, but rather than thinking in terms of property, which Maus eventually (and correctly) sets aside as insufficient, I see Hal's new sovereign mode as a rejection of old methods of governing, in favor of new more invasive and simultaneously participatory method. As Nick Cox notes, disasters "operated as the point of rupture with the old regime with its tolerated or incorrigible quotient of disorder" (11). When the state escalated its interventions and applied a model of order, a new regime was being born. Hal's new methods are rooted in the innovations of the 1578 *Plague Orders*, which do indeed have the collateral effect of disrupting traditional property relations, as Maus finds in the play (42-4).[123] However, Hal's efforts mark the formation of a new way of understanding and containing disorder, which becomes a key component of the prince's apparent prodigal rise (Roche 22-25).

[123] Plague orders for quarantine and restricting community involvement in burial disrupting traditional relationships between neighbors. The *Plague Orders* have a few key characteristics in common with Maus' theory of new property relations: the orders disrupted traditional notions of property by turning the household into a prison, they destroyed the notion of the owner/rent-holder's demi-"sovereignty" over their land (Maus 18), and sometimes destroying chattel property that normal law would have upheld to be heritable. The mutation of property and social relationships are all potential effects of plague outbreaks and the *Plague Orders* that responded to them. Further, by disrupting the normal communal methods for burying the dead and through quarantine, Plague and *Plague Orders* disrupted traditional community relationships promoting the temporary allegiance of the well over any historical relationships with the sick, and Plague itself, of course, disrupted traditional relationships through death (Slack, "Impact" 235). The Plague and *Plague Orders* mark a disruption within the usual political order and property relations similar to what Maus finds within *Henry IV* and Hal, and provides a possible explanation for the property effects Maus finds within the play.

To investigate Hal's method of paying those debts he never promised and bringing order to the plagued world of *1Henry IV*, I return once again to the exchange with Falstaff about the "reckoning." After the hostess' debt is accepted, the intemperate knight seems to contemplate the punishment he might receive and the lengths he will have to go to pay that debt. Sir John connects this thought to his dream of a time when such things as alehouse bills will be beneath his concern, a time when, Falstaff hopes, disorder shall rule England. That time, he seems to believe, will come when Harry is king: "But I prithee, / sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England / when thou art king? And resolution thus fubb'd as / it is with the rusty curb of old father antic the law? / Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief" (1.2.58-62).[124] He describes the law as "the rusty curb" which does not curb him, for it is "antic": a "clown" or "buffoon." Falstaff's contempt for the usual law is quite like that of Nashe's villain Esdras, which I describe in the introduction. He fears the punishment but remains undeterred. The older mode of law and governance does not curb his actions any more than it curbs the Plague, and in both *The Unfortunate Traveler* and *1 Henry IV*, disorder breeds disorder.

In confronting the obvious state-threatening disorder of Hotspur, Hal returns to his official place within the political hierarchy and becomes Hotspur's executioner. But the confrontation with Hotspur is not just Hal's duty, it is also to his benefit, as he is able to collect the honors his "factor" Henry Percy has collected—as far as Hal's concerned, Hotspur's lived simply so that he could "engross up glories deeds on [Hal's] behalf" (3.2.147-8) to be taken by

[124] Hal's response, "Thou shalt" (63) is one of the many potential double-entendres of the play. On the one hand Hal is say that Falstaff shall hang as a thief, which is a reminder of earlier reference to the "ridge of the gallows", but Falstaff's misinterpretation tries to turn deadly punishment into a future gain. Almost as if negotiating, they end up in the middle, Falstaff is not to be a judge but a hangman, but not the one to be hung. Hal's proposal for the future Falstaff is that rather than the interpreter of law or being hung, Falstaff will be the one who carries out the punishment (64-8), the disordered shall discipline the disordered or themselves as Foucault reads prisoners doing in Jeremy Bentham's panopticon (I will leave aside this rather Paracelsian, like-curing-like, until the next chapter). This future plan aims to transform the epitome of the disordered into the one who punishes; this transformation, in part, will be considered in the next chapter.

Hal when he kills him. This is part of the darker side of Hal as King Henry V that is the heart of my last chapters. For now, Hal's solution to Hotspur's disordering threat is simply to defeat him in battle. However, confronting the broad disorder of the Eastcheap gang, Hal's solution is anything but simple. He penetrates the hidden lives of Eastcheap, observes and diagnoses Falstaff and those he encounters in the Boar's Head, and eventually, at the close of *2 Henry IV*, banishes Sir Jack to his politically acceptable, marginal place, where he must either reform, remain, or "die of *a* sweat" (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.30; emphasis added).

Shakespeare's Hal is imagined to expand the ambit of Plague governance by imagining what would happen if the special techniques for countering Plague, established in the plague orders, were deployed outside of the time of emergency (and exception) associated with outbreaks. In particular, Hal deploys the techniques of the invasive investigation of the commons, the efforts to separate victims and potential victims from the healthy, and finally the establishment of another, special socio-political order different and to some degree independent from the general political and social order. If we take seriously the many invocations of plague in the play, as well as the humorally-grounded forms of disorder, we can begin to understand the subtle significance of the "plague" in the text. Viewed through the logics of the official transcript, the events and interactions of *1Henry IV* (particularly with Falstaff) seem to argue that the techniques of Plague governance might be useful beyond Plague time. By the end of the *Henry IV* plays the two main sources of disorder embodied by rebellious "plague-men" are either killed or contained and waiting for death. Into this purified space King Henry V revises and

redeems his own "doubtful" behavior, as well as his father's doubtful claim to the throne (Yachnin 169-71).[125]

In *Henry V*, Hal faces the political machinations of factions within his government, but not open rebellion as appears in the other plays in the sequence. The short-lived treason plot is the continuation of the effort to put Mortimer on the throne, but it requires French incentive and support, according to Shakespeare's Chorus, so it is not nearly the domestic challenge that Bollingbroke represented to Richard II, or that Hotspur and Glendower represented to Hal's father, or that York (and Jack Cade) will represent to Hal's son, or that Richard III will represent to nearly everyone. There is no major division among the English in *Henry V*, except by rank. However, despite the drunken man railing against the king from the street, the disobedient Bardolph and Nym hanged for looting against the King's orders (*Henry V* 3.4.20-112, 4.4.70-4), and general surliness of the soldiers, the commoners do not rise up to threaten Henry V's rule. Thus, there is nothing like the major divisions between the crown and other united factions found in the rest of the plays in the sequence.[126] Shakespeare presents Henry V's rule as not in real jeopardy within the play, except in confrontation with the French at Agincourt. The central conflict of the play is between England and France, not the English King and a rebellion. This makes it unique within the eight-play sequence, although this is technically true of *1 Henry VI* as

[125] As Katharine Maus notes, *Henry V* is "an outlier" within the series of history plays for its lack of major internal conflicts. Although, like his father, King Henry V proceeds to wage war to gain his own doubtful sovereignty claim in France.

[126] To be sure, Holinshed gives more detail to the treason plot that Shakespeare leaves out, and the "peace" within the English polis Henry V brings about is a fraught and temporary one at best seemingly dependent upon war to suppress open conflict. Before the play begins rebellion persists in the treason plot, and although the disordered Falstaff dies off stage in 1.2, Pistol steals back to England to steal and claim the honor of a soldier (5.2.85-89) assuring that England will continue to be marred by the disordered of Eastcheap. The treason plot, supported by France does not raise to the level of open rebellion, and while it might represent a serious threat on Henry V's life, it is dealt with rather handily within one scene (2.2). Other than this threat, Henry is only challenged by France, except when in disguise. His men disobey and shirk their duty, but they go to war with him and fight against difficult odds at Agincourt. No rebellion sweeps England while he is gone. While the play is not without moments of internal discord none of them raise to the level of the fractious factional politics that lead to open the rebellions founded in other plays in the sequence.

well: historically the rising of the house of York is of greater significance than the future-past already lost France. Of course, there is the muttering of his soldiers, but again Henry V creates a cause that satisfies the collective interests of his subjects, thus motivating the general participation of his followers in the conquest of France.[127]

Before *Henry V*, Shakespeare's second tetralogy is above all else, a history of failed or challenged English sovereignty. One can understand Henry IV's political difficulty and failure to maintain good order within a variety of imbricated concerns. Henry IV faces aristocratic factional politics that disrupt proper order by challenging the legitimacy of his rule, and an early modern carnival culture among the commons that resists containment. As Hal's way of containing the Boarshead gang shows, Henry IV's failure is also the failure of the traditional methods for contending with disorder.[128] Henry IV's government seems content to ignore the likes of Falstaff as much as possible, relying on the sheriff and Chief Justice—in short, the usual systems of law and order—to contain him. Hal's method of governing disorder, like *The Plague Orders*, features the practice of active and invasive investigation techniques to make disorder visible, the balancing of punishment with disciplinary self-correction, and the containment or

[127] I will discuss this in much more detail in my chapter on *Henry V* in which I turn towards the harnessing of the will of the subject towards health that, I argue, is mirrored in Hal's governing practices. As others have noted, the marginal Bardolfs of *Henry V* follow the king "To suck, to suck, the very blood to suck" (2.348; Logan "Interpretive" 54) from the conquered French territory. Indeed, from the beginning the famous ode to Salic law is simply a convenient fiction to save the church from a bill to take their lands to feed the nobility (1.1.1-20, 72-89). To dissuade the King from supporting the bill, the Archbishop of Canterbury convinces Henry V to satisfy the ambitions of his subjects with "his" lands in France—obviously, conquest is a means for increasing the fortunes for sovereign and subject alike. Before the final battle of Agincourt Hal offers the hollow bonds of brotherhood and hints at the possible profits those who fight with him will earn upon returning to England. This is the positive spin Hal deploys to convince his tired, diseased, and outnumbered soldiers to fight with him. However, the reality is, since *they* will not be ransomed, the English soldiers have little choice but to fight or face the French.

[128] Maus' reconsideration of Henry IV's difficulties locates the problem in the failure of an older mode of sovereignty in favor of a new mode predicated upon the increasing prominence of chattel forms of property and a certain promiscuity of casual non-traditional relationships, Falstaff and Hal is the prime example (26-7, 44-6). The thrust of her book towards the relationship between property and identity offers a tantalizing reference to Hal's ability to utilize new modes of property, to "author" himself rather than being stuck within rigid traditional property relationships and this traditional identity.

destruction of disorder. During an outbreak, this investigation, searching, and even "imprisonment" was summary, with no concern for the legal rights of the infected. Quarantine may have been enacted preemptively, simply upon suspicion, as the community watched for and responded to early signs of illness rather than merely responding to only the obvious presence of disease. In essence, the bar was lower for this judgment.[129] Hal's investigation and eventual banishment of the Boar's Head gang from within "ten mile[s]" of his "person" (5.5.65-7) does not result from the pursuit of any specific crime; rather he is investigating their general disorder (or plaguishness) and offers, finally, a summary condemnation of their nature.[130]

In confronting the disorder of Eastcheap and Falstaff, Hal models the practices of the Elizabethan plague government while the regular mode of law and order fails to contain the Boar's Head gang. He inspects, and to some extent exerts authority over the Hostess' house, endeavoring to correct its disordered and intemperate state.[131] During his investigation, Hal learns its language and its modes of disorder so that he can purge or control that disorder more effectively than the traditional hue and cry would allow. Hal has charitably paid Sir John's debts without asking for him to pay his part, as we learn during the "buff-jerkins" discussion following the Prince's pox rejoinder:

Fal. Well, though hast call'd her to a reckoning many time and oft

[129] The Orders contain no notion of a trial only the judgment of the magistrates and inspectors. As I will discuss in the next chapter, the testimony of the infected that they were healthy were sometimes given little credence.
[130] As Evans notes, the ultimate banishment of Falstaff is the greater act of Hal's self-disciplining that is necessary to legitimizing his rule (51). However, to some extent Hal and Falstaff are two sides of the same coin. Hal's cold-blooded "use" of Hotspur as a collector of honors that Hal, in killing him, can call his own, is likewise, strikingly self-serving, even as defeating Hotspur serves the state. Perhaps the most selfish act of Hal in the *Henry IV* sequence is his refusal to completely fulfill his proper role within society until after his father's death, only then does he finally and fully banish the "contagious clouds" that he had permitted to "smoother up his beauty from the world", thus only when it "he please[d] again to be himself" does he do so (*1 Henry IV* 197-299). One can argue that Hal only fully governs himself politically, when the reward for that governance is greatest and exclusively his own (when he is King), while Falstaff, likewise only pays debts when he must, and he is always selfishly looking for a way to turn all profit into his.
[131] A place like the Boarshead would have been one of the first places to investigate and close down in the event of a Plague outbreak (Barroll 15).

Prince. Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

Fal. No, I'll give thee thy due, thou has paid all there.

Prince. Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch, and where it would not, I have us'd my credit. (1.2.46-56)

Hal has paid Falstaff's way, and he no longer can. Later, thanks to Poins' plan, Hal "saves" Falstaff from robbery by robbing him and later paying the money back, securing him a commission, leading him into honorable service war, and even supporting his claims to have slain a wounded Hotspur, all perhaps trying to make "a better man" out of "Poor Jack" (3.3.178, 186, 5.5.103-4). Hal's charity in the end is insufficient, as Falstaff's debts continue to mount, the Knight proves to be entirely inveterately disordered.

Further, in the rebel Vernon's words describing Hal, it is "[a]s if he mastered there a double spirit / Of teaching and of learning instantly" (*1 Henry IV* 63-4), Hal sets the model of self-moderation or self-governance according to dominant medical theory learning and adapting simultaneously, and, once prompted, he ably takes up his political role as he begins to pay the debt he "never promised." For example, after killing Hotspur, he laments the justified death of his noble enemy[132] and then, finding Falstaff lying nearby feigning death, expresses regret at this personal loss: "farewell!" I could have better spar'd a better man" (103-4). But he turns this death into a moment of self-diagnosis and restraint, "O, I should heavy miss of thee / If I were much in love with vanity!" (105-6). The Prince disallows the indulgence and vanity to lament what God has allowed to occur, and instead willingly suffers the loss of his man—a loss that Falstaff stubbornly, comically, and disorderedly rejects as he rises from the dead. Shakespeare's Hal is "embodying and making real in himself the emotions" and behaviors that the official

[132] Dramaturgically permitting, even providing an example of morning for those lost to humoral imbalance.

transcript might have "hope[d] to produce" in those who made up the audience (Logan "Interpretive" 52). Temperance always balancing emotional extremes, and rigorous and constant self-diagnosis.

By foregrounding health and illness the play repeatedly models and expects the humoral diagnosis of Falstaff's "full trunk" and Hotspur's unruly temper as intemperate, ungovernable, and thus potential sources of contagion.[133] In contrast, Hal is in control of his humors: he commands *them*, not the other way around. He proves this by transitioning from Eastcheap to the court, from the barroom to the battlefield, encountering the various humors without fear and without threat. He suppresses his emotions at the loss of Falstaff, is not made rash by his father's rough chastisement (unlike Hotspur is), and in the end proves, as he banishes Sir Jack, that Falstaff's humorous but disordered humors have not infected him. Hal is the picture of humoral health able to reside amongst those of "unyok'd humor" but when he chooses can, "imitate the sun":

> Who doth permit the base *contagious* [miasmic] clouds,
> To smother up his beauty form the world,
> That when he please again to be himself,
> Being wanted, he may be more wond'red at
> By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
> Of vapors that did seem to strangle him. (1.2.146-51; emphasis added.)

[133] A further example of such diagnosis is the seemingly common act of King Henry IV's observation when he comes onto the stage complaining that "My blood hath been to cold and temperate" (1.3.1), this humoral language indicates his awareness of his advancing age, *and* testifies to the audience's ability to read the state of his humors from his report. Likewise, everyone would have understood that he was melancholic and phlegmatic, meaning he was old and that perhaps his mind was failing (Reid 472).

Hal is not ruled by his humors any more than he is strangled by the vapors of the Boar's Head and her crew. While he may seem to suffer from "God's plague [that] is last and most heavey" in Dekker's list of figurative plagues, that of a good man with health who keeps company with "the Devil" or temptation ("*Almanacke*" sig. B5r), he is only doing so until "he please" himself to do otherwise. Surrounded as he is by the infectious lowness of Eastcheap and tempted by the Lord of Misrule, Falstaff, according to the logic of humoral medicine Hal's wondrous perseverance is only possible if his humors are in balance and able to preserve the "neutrality" Donne describes.[134] His humoral health (proper or temperate order) is his own creation, which offers a model of immunity through humoral control.

In contrast, Falstaff manifests the sympathetic plague-like contradiction, always a source of disorder, but also a possible a source of order, as in the "plague of all cowards" he attempts to order the cowards by drawing attention to and making them aware of their cowardice in a perverse inversion of order that makes honor among thieves the "proper" order. Like Falstaff in the "plague of all cowards moment," *The Orders* expected greater disciplinary participation and monitoring of oneself and others. This is the *Orders'* contradiction: Falstaff, like the poor, is the source of The Plague and the one who is plagued, and he must be the cure of his own disorder and thus of the Plague within himself. As Greenblatt notes, Falstaff and company represent the disordered commons whom the English governors attempted to order (43). Hal is a foil to this, seemingly at odds with his place, the unruly who should rule, but who in truth is preparing for his future rule. In the "a plague of all cowards" the play exposes the logic that "the commons"—as represented by Falstaff—are both the sympathetic victims and the dangerous source of Plague,

[134] So masterful is Hal of his humors that he is able to confidently and without hint of danger say (inoculated by his future greatness), "I am now full of all humors…" these humors are from the drawers whose conversation has so filled him up (2.4.92-3).

both the potential watchers and those being watched, and as such are key to the production of order (Grigsby 145-6; Slack, "Impact" 117, 239-40). They must become like Hal, immune from the "contagious clouds" and able to break "through the foul and ugly mists / Of vapors that did seem to strangle" them (1.2.198- 203) by governing their humors and not succumbing to disorder.

Being mindful of one's health and the health of neighbors was both the trigger that caused the *Orders* to be put into effect and the general behavior that made the *Orders* possible.[135] Watching for news of plague's presence and progress was the first step to managing the plague in the 1578 orders: the objective is to recognize Plague's presence and differentiate it from other diseases. Watching and reporting are motivated by fear of Plague (Cox 8) and a general concern for health and survival in the face of capricious death and suffering. This overcomes traditional relationships and loyalties once the fear of Plague is great enough. While Hal mocks the poor drawer, Francis (2.4.1-79), the disruption of his duty to his master in obedience to the Crowned Prince is precisely the type of disruption the *Orders* might effect if Frances were to refuse to do his duty or flea from London rather than stay in service to his master. Further, the seemingly casual perusal of the contents of Falstaff's pockets by Peto and Hal at the end of 2.4 turns Falstaff's comrade into an inspector who disregards customary alliances in obedience to the Hal's special order. Discovering Falstaff's "monstrous" poverty, Hal declares his intention of "procuring this fat rogue a charge of foot" and paying the robbed "money … back again with interest" (2.4.529-49).

[135] Justices were to gather in a location "clear from infection" unless they dwell "[i]n or near places infected" or, of course, are themselves infected ("Orders" 180). For reports of the plague infection to even be spread people needed to be watching each other, since the tendency was to suppress such reports (Barroll 75).

By invoking The Plague through Falstaff and setting Hal personally to governing him, the play produces a disciplinary mode of governing that shows the bad example juxtaposed with the good. The dramaturgy depends upon the audience's support of Hal (the future great King Henry V) over the witty Falstaff and the sympathetic Hotspur in *1 Henry IV* in a purge that was healing (Logan "Interprative" 50) as well didactic: the correct behavior was to accept providence.[136] The *Orders* expected that the neighbors would accept death and suffering as God's will, rather than vainly try to resist it, and instead report the suspicious signs of sickness to the local magistrate and accept the suffering of their friends, neighbors, family, and even in theory their own suffering. The play's dramatic tension requires both the audience's sympathy for Hotspur and Falstaff *and* simultaneously trusts that the audience will sacrifice that sympathy for the greater glory of the English past that King Henry V will bring about.[137] When Falstaff somewhat comically returns from the dead at the end of *1 Henry IV,* he refuses the death Hal advised him he owed: "Say thy prayers, and farewell … thou owest God a death" (5.1.124-6). But instead of praying Falstaff replies to the empty stage that "'Tis not due yet, I would be loath to pay him / before his day" (127-8), of course, somehow the war-plague does not take his life and instead gives him an income and the opportunity for some honor through dishonesty when he claims to have landed the final blow upon Hal's "trophy" Hotspur—a lie Hal supportively "donates" to Falstaff's cause (5.4.131-58). However, at the end of *2 Henry IV* Falstaff cannot refuse Henry V's banishment, and when Shakespeare returns to the history, he makes Falstaff die off stage in the first scene of the second act of *Henry V*. Likewise, the dramaturgy of these moments require

[136] To be sure, *1 Henry IV* contains disruptions to the official transcript, as *Henry V* contains the inherent dissonances (Logan "Interpretive" 65) within a play that at first glance appears to be nothing more than a celebration of a "great" English King.

[137] This is a future-past that will, eventually, lead to the Tudor political order, and this history is part of the general understanding and official transcript that shape "an emergent public sphere, though it is clearly a contingent and ephemeral one" (Logan 51) as the official transcript is countered by hidden transcripts and transcripts of resistance.

that in the end the audience supports Hal's ascension and willingly follows (with the Chorus' help) him to war in France without Falstaff; although, this dramaturgy is unquestionably tinged with a dark skepticism as the "lovely bully" ascends to the throne.

The plot of *1 Henry IV*, if imagined not just as conceptually thwarting notions of a nobility-led rebellion, but also as interested in containing the rebellious energies of the commons of early modern England through Falstaff, mobilizes plague as a secondary or connotative threat to both of the plays' central disorders.[138] Plague might follow if the Plantagenets fail and Hotspur becomes king, dividing England, or if Hal succumbs to Falstaff's temptations as, dramaturgically, the audience does to some degree. Because, the lesson of the play (and of the *Orders*) is that the loss of admirable Henry Percy and witty Falstaff are at least partially tragic. For Hal's triumph and ascension to the throne to be complete it must be infectiously tempting to sympathize with the rebellious and disordered elements of the play, so that his tragic killing and rejection of them becomes the audience's as well; otherwise, Hal's coronation is a dark beginning rather than the beginning of a glorious period in English history.[139] Thus, Hotspur is a charismatic source of disorder. Not a flat villain, he is loved and loving (Knoepflmacher 471) an ambitious and to some degree admirable rebel, whose great fault is too much pride and ambition, *and*, above all else, a man tragically too much governed by his own hot-humors. Of course, Falstaff was so beloved that even the queen wanted to see more of him. But Plague is the terror that only need be hinted at. However, it was a well understood consequence of the humoral disorder of a Hotspur as king or Falstaff running free, perhaps as Chief Justice. Having sympathy

[138] Stephen Greenblatt reads "Falstaff's company, marching off to Shrewsbury, … [as] the perfect emblem of this containment," brought together by Falstaff, they are the very uncontained vagrants that so haunted the English imagination (43).
[139] To some extent Hal's confiding his plans and feelings is perhaps what begins the audience's unification with the future King (Logan "Interpretive" 53).

for the world banished behind their doors, those left to die (as Falstaff dies off stage in *Henry V*) or who are killed by the state (as Hotspur is) is understandable; as I have noted, even Hal regrets having killed Hotspur. Such unbalanced people, though, breed disorder and disease. This is the core logic underlying participation in the orders. Again as Donne, Lodge, and others describe humoral imbalance and disorder breeds disease, and one individual could lead to general outbreaks (Gilman, "Writing" 18; Healy, "Fictions" 43). According to the official transcript, order must be established and preserved. Authority must penetrate into the homes and humoral hearts of the people and seek out disorder and sickness, and finding it, banish it.

By producing Falstaff as the representation of another challenge to the dominate order, the play produces a 'plague,' which, like the many plagues of the early modern world, serves as a knowable, familiar, and manageable, if not ultimately curable "plague". This production follows an inoculatory logic that is at the core of the Plague Orders. Rather than banishing plague victims (as was done with lepers), they were fixed in place within the polis. "Nothing reinforces the host body politic better than an ill that has been dominated and turned against itself," Esposito argues ("Immunitas" 124). In the second half of the sixteenth century "an appreciable change occurred in the semantics" of health and illness, and disease comes to be seen "as strengthening or even creating the diseased organism's self-defense through opposition" (124). By making conspicuous the plague(d), the orders engendered the will to participate by keeping the exemplars of the threat within their individual settings (139). As the body's immune system is spurred to action by the injection of a small amount of infection, Shakespeare injects the body politic with infectious Falstaff who must prompt a rejection of his poison to ward off the greater poison, Plague. In the end (*2 Henry IV* 5.5), Hal, now Henry V, dominates the Eastcheap gang and directs their attention towards themselves, pointing to their disordered "riots" and as the *Plague Orders*

sought to do to those under its governance. Finally, Hal offers them the possibility of redemption if "we hear you do reform yourselves / We will, according to your strengths and qualities, / Give you advancement (5.5.70-2). *1 Henry IV* enacts a form of domination upon the audience through the play's dramaturgy that directs their attention towards the management of their own humors and models through Hal and the practice of observing the humors and intemperate behaviors of others who do not manage their behavior. *1 Henry IV* depicts the perfectly disordered Falstaff and Hotspur, and in Hal's "teaching *and* learning" demonstrates a new method of ordering as the cure for early modern English plagues.

CHAPTER THREE
"what is amiss plague and infection mend": Survival in Time of Plagues

"Now scorned of all the world; alone,
None seek thee, nor must thou seek none,
But like a prisoner must be kept
In thine own walls, till thou has wept
Thine eyes out, to behold they sweet
Dead children heaped about thy feet"

Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker *"*Newes from Graves Ende"

"We are punished with a Sicknesse which is dreadfull in three manner of ways: in the general spreading; in the quicknesse of the stroke; and in the terror which waits upon it. It is generall: ... It is quicke: for it kills suddenly; it is full of terror, for the Father dares not come neere the infected Son, nor the Son come to take a blessing from the Father, lest hee bee pyysoned by it: the Mother abhors to kisse her owne Children, or to touch the sides of her own Husband: no friend in this battel will relieve his wounded friend, no Brother shake his brother by the hand at farewell."

Thomas Dekker *A Rod for Run-awayes*

"Plague could inflame old resentments and be used as a weapon to pay off old scores between neighbors. They refused to bury one another's dead, and accused one another of bringing infection into a street. To allege that someone was infected was as powerful a local slander as the accusation that a man's wife was a whore. Plague could also be a weapon in domestic squabbles as with the Worcestershire husbandman in 1637 who threatened to go to Preteigne and 'fetch the plague' back to his wife and children"

Paul Slack *The Impact of Plague*

SECTION I: Plaguing the English Humoral-Paraselsian Innovation

In this second chapter, I turn from the problem of governing the plaguey disordered world found in East Cheap and populated by Falstaff and his followers—paralleled by the rebellious Hotspur and irregular Glendower—to a consideration of those "diagnosed" as part of that disorder. This is partially an exploration of "the wide range of actions and attitudes which were open to ordinary people in the face the plague" (Slack 284), but specifically an exploration of the affordances offered by Plague to the plagued. The second chapter 'asked under what terms did the state respond to Plague?' This chapter will begin with the play of the impulse for self-

preservation and the greater freedom afforded by that collective near-singular concern within the emergency, which produced both less control and greater repression, before turning to the exploration of the work that the Plague did within society as a corrective agent. This turn follows the thread developed in the last chapter of people as "plague"—not just the plagued, as we might think of them—but as actual agents of Plague, types of plague themselves, and, specifically, potential carriers of Plague. Key to understanding this early modern aspect of the Plague assemblage is the Paracelsian innovation in medical theory, which in England intermingles with humoral rationalizations, and which, by the turn of the century, had become a prominent model for understanding Plague.[140]

The Swiss Paracelsus is credited as the founder of the modern study of toxicology and medicine (Goodrick-Clark 13). Born Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, his name change to Paracelsus (surpassing Celsus) coincided with his efforts to publish his humor-based medical theories indicating his desire to displace the ancient and long accepted theories like those in Celsus' De Medicina, whose medical encyclopedia was accepted as containing the best medical knowledge of the Roman world. Paracelsus sought to do away with the pagan humoral understanding of medicine by adapting a new, alchemical based theory more readily reconcilable to Christianity (Debus 30). His practice required a somewhat sophisticated knowledge of the organs and the chemicals effects on those organs ("Paramirum" 76-95; "Medicinae" 50-52).[141] However, in the English context it would be incorrect to say that Paracelsian theory displaced the humoral, or to use exclusively oppositional terms to describe the two concepts and their relative

[140] Paracelsian thinking was well known enough that he and it "directly inspired" Marlowe's Faust (Goodrick-Clarke 5).

[141] Although, Paracelsus is not necessarily advocating for professional medicalization, declaring that "man is his own physician" for simple wounds ("Paramirum" 85). Thus, within the writings of Paracelsus is a continued reliance of self-diagnosis and self-treatment, but with a general deemphasis of the behavioral component that was the core of humoralism.

rise and fall as metaphoric explanations of the body, health, and sickness (Healy 48).[142] Rather than rejecting the new theory, the influential London master of the Barbers-Surgeons, George Baker (elected in 1597) wrote that Paracelsian theory held promise, but required a humoral knowledge to be used effectively.[143] The humoral, like piety, provided a model for proper self-governance—of the temperate managing of one's emotions avoiding ungoverned extremes and excesses—which the Falstaffs and Hotspurs were unable to follow. Paracelsianism *also* held that "virtue or propriety" played significant roles in health, and that "what we might call the powers of suggestion and mass hysteria" could be dangerous because of the imagination's centrality to health (Weeks 514, 516; Fletcher 2). However, Paracelsianism operated on decidedly different terms than humoralism.

Part I: Paracelsus' Alchemist

There are three general aspects of Paracelsianism that are significant when considering the condition of the Plagued and the politics of Plague: first, unlike humoral prescriptions which generally called for the proper application of generally benign foods and liquids (drinking one's own urine aside), Paracelsianism explicitly required the proper administration of what was otherwise considered 'poison'. This, of course, gave medical intervention a higher possibility of danger—phlebotomy and other purgative practices of the humoralist aside—and thus required a greater degree of expertise. Further, the alchemical theories of Paracelsus were both

[142] While early moderns could dissect the body, could see it in its parts, they could not generally understand its function beyond the limiting humoral or Paracelsian metaphor. Likewise, as I describe in chapter one, health and sickness while being states of the body that existed, could not be understand literally.
[143] William Clowes, not a member of the Barbers-Surgeons company, demonstrates the Galen versus Paracelsus state of play in early modern English medicine in 1602: the highly-regarded physician's treatise on scrofula, glandular swelling probably related to tuberculosis, is primarily of a Paracelsian inclination (Totaro 61-2).

astronomically macrocosmic, and microcosmically tied to specific organs.[144] He proposed that "[t]here are seven organs in the body which require no nourishment but are self-sufficient like the seven planets which nourish themselves, taking nothing from each other, nor from the stars" ("Medicinae" 52). He then goes on to describe these organs and their relative planetary bodies: "Jupiter and the liver are to be understood" as related, "so the brain and the Moon, the heart the Sun, the spleen Saturn, the lungs Mercury, and the kidneys Venus" (52). Each solar body functions self-sufficiently as do the correlating organs within Paracelsianism: "If you do not understand this, you cannot induce a crisis in the natural diseases caused by" the imbalance of elements/poisons (52). Paracelsian theory posited the alchemical *tria prima* of mercury, salt, and sulfur that were each necessary for maintaining a healthy balance among the body's organs (Weeks 514). To apply these, a practitioner must understand the relationship of the organs to the balance of the chemicals, perhaps consult relevant astronomical events to discover what may have led to the imbalance, then properly apply the correct "poison" in the correct quantity. These are decidedly complicated essential premises for proper medical intervention under Paraceslian theory. In comparison, at its most basic, humoral theory was focused on balancing four humors represented by four types of fluid, and an imbalance could be recognized by a person's behavior and countered by a variety of "cures" both ad hoc and well known, as shown in *1 Henry IV*.[145] It was a quite common diagnostic practice, compared to Paracelsianism, which was well out of the layman's capabilities; this, in part, must explain the resilience of humoralism in the face of Paracelsianism's rise in prominence.[146]

[144] The complexity is unsurprising as Paracelsus rather than drawing on any one approach to medicine and disease, drew upon everything from folk practices to barber-surgeons to academics (Guggenheim 1189-90).
[145] Humoral cures might be as simple as more fresh air, cooling off, heating up, drinking wine, eating more/less, etc.
[146] Ironically it was Paracelsus' intention to do away with what he saw as "a false and corrupt academic establishment" (Weeks 513), but his medical theory and treatment of disease using poisonous chemicals was certainly not for the layman—of course, humoralism contained practices, like bleeding and other purgatives, that were also the purview of medical professional.

This leads to the second core component of Paracelsianism for this chapter, the *pharmakon*, which is foremost the poison that can also be the cure, if properly administered. Roberto Esposito's refinement of biopolitics expands upon the classic notion of curative-poison and considers the *pharmakon* as a poison kept within the body politic to function as both a poison and a scapegoat. Plague quarantine policy produces the logics of this *pharmakon*: it is the poison that if properly applied produces the cure, but that application is not upon the banished, but upon those maintained within the community. As a site of infection, the quarantine houses are the poisonous threat to the well—as signs of the Plague's presence—locations of suffering, as punishment issued by both God and the State for no crime upon the sick. They are the contained source: the inhabitants are both the present, infected, and simultaneously the excluded poison kept within the body of the city that Esposito describes ("Immunitas" 15) —the plagued were not locked up and forgotten, but cared for through donations and monitored if not by watchmen then by neighbors. This fits within the core logic that God's Plague and the government's policy—e.g., quarantine that exacerbates the suffering of the afflicted—were also curative for the community, though not the individual (Gilman 42, 68, 203-4). Quarantine as a cure locates the disease, symbolically purifying the non-Plagued space as it restrains the disease within the bodies of the sick, within their households. But, their suffering, restraint, ongoing survival, and eventual death mark them and their location as a poison, a potential harm—in comingling humorally theory the quarantined were a source of fear and anguish that during an outbreak were not banished, but kept the local threat of unhealthy imbalance. But, within the logic of the *pharmakon*, such poison was necessary to preserve the health of the community.

These potential Paracelsian-based rationalizations supporting Plague policies are not as readily afforded by humoral theory.[147] For the humoral, the disordered subjects are scapegoats blamed for Plague, to which their mismanaged-humors made them susceptible. Within Paracelsian political metaphor, they remain scapegoats, but that is because they embody the invisible disease made visible, when they grow sick, and therefore they must be guarded against. They are not just the figurative mark of the disease, but when that disease only exists as metaphor, they themselves *are* the disease, the poison. The sick do not merely represent the poisonous imbalanced. They are the poison. This chapter aims to consider this political reality from the position of the 'poison', exploring the plagued-politics surrounding these victims. The diseased or potentially diseased become the threat to "internal purity and security" that Jacques Derrida describes in his discussion of "Plato's Pharmacy": *pharmakeia-pharmakon-pharmakeus* (128).

Derrida's exploration of *pharma*-logics notes a curious absence: "Plato seems to place no emphasis on the word *pharmakon* at the point" of discussing the moment of governance, "when poison under the eyes of the king, appears as the truth of the remedy" (129)—that is, when the exercise of corrective punishing power functions as a cure for disorder.[148] In confrontation with the internal disorder, the king applies a prescription of violence/poison, but rather than describing this through the *pharmakon*, as the curing poison, Derrida argues that Plato elides another concept. It is not simply poison that is the cure for Plato, Derrida concludes. Instead, within the "chain" of words, "*pharmakeia-pharmakon-pharmakeus*" it is the one, *pharmakoi* (plural of *pharmakos*), that Plato never uses, the one "hidden" that Derrida argues marks the

[147] Although, humoral bleeding as a metaphor of the purgative also certainly maps on to the effect of Plague's death and government punishment.
[148] The *Orders* were the explicit rule of the sovereign through their representatives the justices of the peace and their deputies.

cure. The Greek *pharmakoi* are "the *evil* and the *outside*" who are ritually excluded "out of the body [politic] (and out) of the city" (130). To put it in terms which Giorgio Agamben has made famous, the quarantined are the not strictly speaking *homo sacer*, not exactly the one who can be killed by anyone; although, they have been forcibly rendered, essentially, as bare life (*zoe*). However, this captures the plague-victim's position less accurately than Derrida's description of *pharmakoi*, who are not necessarily excluded sacrifices, but those who have been excised as evil or poison, and through their exclusion become a source of cure for the *polis*. The sick, as the most visible sign of Plague's presence, become the disease—not represent metonymically as they might have for us but as part of it synecdochally. Therefore, excluding them is to quarantine *the* Plague, while exacerbating their suffering, keeping it present. The Plague and *Plague Orders* produced a sort of *pharmakoi*, the Plagued, the conspicuously the dying, whose deaths generate purity and "cure" through exclusion. As Paracelsus argues, "in all good things poison also resides [therefore] … must one then not separate the poison from what is good, taking the good and leaving what is bad? Of course one must" separate poison form the good ("Paragranum" 247), and occasionally use poisons to promote the good.

Logistically, during a full-blown Plague outbreak, the early moderns could not move and quarantine so many sick beyond the city walls without great difficulty and risk, and so they resorted to internal segregation. This early modern segregation effectively combines the logic of the *pharmakoi* that Derrida describes with the modification to the general concept of *pharmakon* of the poison kept within the body that Esposito's biopolitical theory purposes. The diseased-*pharmakoi* are the scapegoats, sacrificial sources of purity "on the boundary line between inside and outside" (Derrida 133), even as they are kept within the internal space. Further, to control by restraining the disease in the form of the bodies of the sick the diseased-*pharmakoi* is to *seem* to

affect the disease in a way that cures the community so that the well are 'free' of the disease, even as they must endure the threat, suffering, and quarantined presence: the contaminated-sick are conspicuously contained, while only the apparently pure-healthy remain free. The *pharmakoi* become the poison as the threat contained and the cure, as that poison secured within the quarantined spaces. As in the *Henry IV* plays, the plaguey person, as a potential source of disorder and Plague, generates both sympathy and anxiety. Paraceslianism partially offers a rationale that allows for the understanding of these persons as diseased, and thus of quarantine as actually containing that disease. Not just the humorally disordered who might mysteriously engender disease, but those who are understood as part of the disease, and therefore, *pharmakoi* kept at the margin between inside and outside as the evil-poison that is the cure.

The third core component of Paracelsian theory that is important here, is that it turned the humoral model conceptually *inside out*, by positing that the world was poisonous (Debuss 30; Willard 525), rather than sickness only coming from within the person or a person's internal condition being what might draw or render one susceptible to a miasmic threat.[149] Thus, under Paracelsian theory, the diseased were infected with the otherwise invisible poison of the world or their organs corrupted by the distant astrological movements: "It must be understood that the human being does not poison the external [world] but vice versa" (Paracelsus, "Astronomia" 177). Nashe's monstrous Zadok, which I cite in the introduction, offers the example of one who seeks to become infected as a way to attack his enemy, the Pope—that is, absorb the poison-plague of the world and make it his weapon as well as the source of his own death. Parallel to this literary example, Slack relates the story of a Worcestershire husbandman in 1637 who threatened to go to Preteigne and 'fetch the plague' back to his wife and children" (293) to settle

[149] Beginning at least as early as 1543, miasmic theory of infection was fading as a rationale for the spread of disease (Slack 203).

a domestic dispute—to go to where the Plague was and bring it home with him.[150] There was, in the period, a pervasive sense of the disease as existing in the world rather than arising from within people—a perception that aligns more with Paracelsianism than humoralism.[151]

Examining the differences between Humoralism and Paraclesianism is important for understanding the political subject under *The Plague Orders* and *also* as the basis of a conceptual model projected upon the metaphorical political body. Under a humoral political model, the body of the subject or state was understood as able to be governed (by self or society) in a way that would ward off infection and disorder from within itself by managing personal, community, and national disorder (Reid 472). Extreme disorder was a result of the mismanagement of the political body's internal world and *perhaps* also of contact with external sources of disorder. Further, humoral theory promoted the notion of temperance for the individual, and what Edmund Dudley called "concordant obedience" to one's place in society for the body politic (86).[152] Paracelsianism similarly called for a balancing of the body and poisons that are also potentially curative, but placed greater emphasis upon the body's vulnerability to infection from the external

[150] As Slack notes elsewhere, that those who were critics of the government were not necessarily for less government but more in the form of "more pesthouses and places of isolation for the infected and their contacts" (251-2, 202).

[151] A fourth less significant feature of Paracelsianism is the value of harmony. This can be illustrated by a brief rereading of Donne's lamentation that "There is no health; physicians say that we /At best, enjoy but a neutrality" (91-2), discussed in the previous chapter, that suggests that the passage might not be as entirely humoral as it appears at first glance. While Gilman is on solid ground as he declares Donne's "neutrality" to be the "harmonious" balance of "the body's humors" in his study of the plague writing (18), Donne's interest in Paraceslsus (Fletcher; Keller) suggests another possible reading of the passage. A few lines earlier there is a hint of Paracelsian thought working its way into this humoral description of how "with due temper men do then forgo, / Or covet things, when they their true worth know" (89-90). Although seemingly a humoral maxim advocating moderation, to "forgo / Or covet" as the worth of things is known suggests something other than the humoral. Indeed, the choice between a thing that may or may not be poison to preserve the "neutrality" of good health based on one's ability to discern which is which, is also common to Paracelsianism. This reconsideration of Donne's healthy "neutrality" illustrates the point that both humoralism and Paracelsianism share a quest for balance but do so upon very different terms.

[152] Edmund Dudley's *The Tree of the Commonwealth* is an attempt to figure the commonwealth of England as a tree, the somewhat tortured early sixteenth century metaphor that attempts to understand the state as an organic body under an absolute monarch, Henry VIII in which concordance to one's social position is the chief virtue.

threat of the poisonous world.[153] The Paracelsian body was more subject to invasion and external domination by "invisible diseases" that could invade and destroy the body (Weeks 507). The metaphor of Paracelsian theory, when applied to the health of the state, promoted the necessity of guarding diligently against external threats and responding with the proper application of poison when necessary. However, the segregation, by the *Plague Orders*, of individuals and households—the demi-commonwealths within the body politic—risked disrupting the symmetry between the various parts of society, defying the Aristotelian admonishment (which political theorists like Dudley followed), in *Politics*, that without such symmetry the state "perishes" (209). Thus, the practice of quarantine and the flight of political leaders disrupted the harmony and symmetry—promoted by Paracelsian theory of the body—within the body-politic metaphor and, as in humoral theories, created disorder and imbalance. The similarities and differences between humoral and Paracelsian theory are important for the analysis of the plays that follow. Not just because each play has significant elements of both theories within them, but because these elements along with the function of "plague" offer unique insights into the analysis of the plays that follows.

The three texts of this chapter provide two basic experiences of the Plague: the freedom of disorder within a Plague visitation and the tragic promiscuity of death within Plagued disorder. All three offer cautionary examples of the disruptive lack of political symmetry (as in *1* & *2 Henry IV*) created by flight and quarantine. Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* explores the opportunities afforded, during plague time, to those who remained behind when the masters had

[153] "Though shifting and unstable, the Galenic body is never substantially displaced by the emergent Paracelsan form with which it coexists; indeed, it remains the dominant model, but by 1600 its boundaries are often represented as less distinct and less material (sometimes appearing to dissipate altogether in a Neoplatonic-type universe of spirit), more porous and vulnerable, and thus more susceptible to penetration and occupation by hostile circumambient forces" (Healy 48).

evacuated. This play also castigates the foreign theories of the Swiss Alchemist, and rather than a typical Jonsonian world of humoral self-governance, the play is instead ruled by normalized fraud that begins with the Alchemist and gang but is appropriated by the returning master, Lovewit. Above all, this play produces a segregated political body over whom authority is absent, a context in which external bodies have penetrated the city, and in which neighbors have watched, but not inquired into, the strange activities that they have witnessed, neglecting their civic duty. Turning to Shakespeare and the tragedy of outbreak, the Plagued Verona faces the voluntary disordered segregation of two leading families—a segregation that disrupts the natural passions of youth. Additionally, the quarantining of the "plagued" (or potentially plagued) becomes central to the tragic plot; and the disorders of the play occur under the improper or ineffectual governance of Prince Escalus. *Romeo and Juliet* produces a largely humoral understanding of health and thus of Plague that functions as a series of balancing acts as the ultimate curative is affected by the disorders that have run their course in the play. In the case of the love of Romeo and Juliet, this disorder is born of the original disorder of their feuding households. The resolution of the play comes about through the empathy of shared loss between the fathers which, momentarily at least, creates order. The play, in certain moments, seems to be looking beyond the humoral without an answer, as the political order is not convincingly corrected any more than Mercutio's revenge is actually achieved. In *Timon of Athens*, however, Shakespeare seems to look more concretely beyond the humoral, considering the significance of like to cure like, as Timon sets Athens to right by plaguing the city with all the evils that it has been shown to contain. The play's core conflicts are the result of unjust segregation of the body politic in the form of Timon's banishment, after he has been refused aid, as well as the banishment of Alcibiades. Timon turns Athenians' sins back upon them to either destroy or

correct the city, and his sacrificial death is marked by his diseased cure-assault and tombstone "gift" to the polis that denied him aid as a member of the community and instead ostracized him.

Part II: Endless Plague: Jonson's "chemical cozener" and non-Community

The final test of community is defined through death, which creates the potential for a gift that is without the possibility of reciprocity, the *munus* at the core of *communitas* (Esposito, "Communitas" 4-5). The plagued politics and non-community of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610) emerges from the conspicuous and near complete absence of humoral concerns among the characters of play during an outbreak and with a complete disregard for the suffering and the dead within Plague afflicted London. The play's social world is joined in pursuit of self-interest. Instead, this time of potential danger and an absent master class simply gives the gang an opportunity to use alchemy to con citizens of London.[154] Instead of judging the humors of a Falstaff and chiding him for them, or a Hal or King Henry IV modeling the monitoring of their own humors, the characters of *The Alchemist* follow their self-interests above all else, thus denying any possibility of true community with each other. From this, I argue, the play conspicuously produces three *pharma*-rooted breakdowns that ensure the continuing disorder and susceptibility to Plague. First, the dead (*pharmakoi*), like the already gulled victims, are forgotten, excluded by the instrumental social world of the play in which the plague dead are barely mentioned. The one careful exception, Lovewit's dead first wife, assures that there have

[154] While the lack of the overt humoral in this play is unusual both for Jonson and for the city comedy (Christensen 1; Kendrick 73), the temporary alliances are typical of a city comedy. This is generally the fundamental premise of plays like *Michealmas Term*, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*¸ *Your Five Young Gallants*, or *Bartholomew Fair*; a certain amount of anonymity is a key component to the criminality depicted in these early modern plays about grift, graft, and theft.
Also, worth noting, it is the period just before and during which this play was written and performed that the London refinements of plague ordering are written—these are refinements that would later be added to the front of the *Plague Orders*, as the humoral theory advice was dropped entirely from the back of the *Orders*. The play, in part, is a negative response to changing attitudes towards health in the early years of the Seventeenth century.

been dead, but she is mentioned very briefly and entirely forgotten by him, as everyone else in the play seems to forget the plague toll except as the force that keeps Lovewit—the normal source of authority—from returning to the city. Next, in the end, no one is really made to take blame, as even Doll and Subtle—potential *pharmakon* (scapegoats)—disappear over the fence without a trace. Finally, because of this failure to remember, Lovewit is free to pursue his self-interest without administering the poison (*pharmakon*) of correction upon Jeremy, nor is restitution made (balance restored) since none offer a complaint of law—essentially, because no one is entirely innocent.[155]

The incredible promises of alchemy are so disordering that even before the first gulls show up, the gang's plans are threatened by the prospect of their rewards. The threat is not the Plague that afflicts the city, but the gang's own self-interest. The "alchemist"—who transformed the lead of Jeremy-the-servant into the gold of Face-the-guller (as Subtle claims)—thinks that he should get the most profits, while Jeremy argues that he should be the highest rewarded, since he is the one who built the furnace, provided the household, and procured the credit for the implements of their con (1.1.70-1). But Jeremy has the capacity to make these contributions only because Lovewit has abandoned him—the master's absence makes Jeremy's participation possible, as Subtle points out (49-50). Further, the disorder of Lovewit's house and of "masterless" Jeremy creates the opportunity for Subtle and Doll to "infect" Jeremy, and then London. Thus, disorder seems to attract and spawn more disorder within the play—an element of humoralism, that demonstrates the true function of disorders within the play. The master's self-protective flight towards immunity from Plague demonstrates his rejection of his obligations to

[155] Both the administration of poison and seeking balance would have been a concern of an English humoral-Paracelsian physician.

his household, neighborhood, and London; such rejection fragments the neighborhood and city, and leaves them susceptible to this "foreign" gulling alchemist's invasion.

The further intemperate self-interest of the master class first appears in Sir Mammon who not only seeks to acquire the means to turn "All that is metal in [his] house to gold" (2.1.30) but plans to trick The Alchemist out of it. In time of Plague, the play's highest-ranking character pursues this greedy trick with "ungoverned haste" (3.2.20) according to Subtle.[156] This knight, like Shakespeare's fallen knight, Falstaff, is anything but a source of correction. The temptation of Jonson's "alchemy [that] is … the grand symbol … the object of limitless desires, [which] promises infinite wealth and transformative power" is too much for the characters of the play to resist. This alchemy in the play has been considered to function as a critique of nascent capitalism (Haynes 40, 36). However, within the Plague infected city, this "Paracelsian" is doing more than critiquing economic self-interest. Alchemy's promise is to the individual, not the community, and Jonson's Alchemist's "shop" (Lovewit's house) is busy with a series of con-based commercial transactions.[157] Even Mammon's plan to use the Philosopher's Stone "to fright the plague / Out o' the kingdom, in three months" (2.1.69-70) is an afterthought that follows the

[156] In this moment and in others, Jonson places language that is loosely or entirely humoral into Subtle's mouth. The potential criticism here seems aware of the practices promoted by the influential former head of the Barbers-Surgeon company, George Baker, who argued that to use Paracelsian theory one had to also be well-versed in humoral theory (Debus 56-7). Paracelsus may have been the one often called "the alchemist" but the play is set in plagued London and the English followers of Paracelsus are humoralists as well. This is not the only moment when Subtle produces the humoral. When, he deals with the Dapper he proscribes "fasting" and taking "drops of vinegar", humoral practices, which quickly turns absurdist: "bathing of fingers' ends" and washing of eyes and crying "'hum', thrice; and then 'buzz', as often" (1.2.165-71). The humoral merely buttresses the conning Alchemist's goal. This bit of verisimilitude joins humoralism to Paracelsus creating an English Paracelsian who is a conman—it is not hard to imagine what the George Bakers of London thought of Jonson's play. Subtle both produces Paracelsus' keys "Sal[t]", Sulphur, and mercury (2.2.186), as one who, Mammon believes, "will not hear a word / Of Galen, or his tedious recipes" (2.3.232-3), but also demonstrates for the audience the Alchemist's ability to "use" humoral theory to turn Mammon's own attempt to "gull" the guller against the Knight, enmeshing him instead within a "Barnard's law" con: convincing him that he is conning Subtle when the opposite is true (2.1.77-8; Haynes 24).

[157] The proliferation of these transactions express the community-destroying essence of what Ferdinand Tönnies describes as Gesellschaft: "everyone is out for himself alone and living in a state of tension against everyone else. … Nobody wants to do anything for anyone else, nobody wants to yield or give anything unless he gets something in return that he regards as at least an equal trade-off" (52).

list of things that he'll do for himself before he finally considers his obligation as a member of the community and a noble figure of authority.[158]

In the play, community-denying self-service comes before duty, which is neglected: not only did Lovewit abandon Jeremy in the face of the Plague threat, but he seems to have long neglected his role as a neighbor, and thus as a householder within London—it becomes evident that he does not really know his anonymous neighbors (5.1.43). As I described in Chapter two, the core expectations of the *Orders* was that people would monitor themselves and their neighbors for indications of the deadly disease. But the gang is not threatened by an investigating constable or justice tipped off by their neighbors, primarily because the people of London are unwilling to uphold their duty to investigate or report odd goings-on such as those related to the gang's subterfuge. After learning of the odd activities at his house, Lovewit asks if Jeremy had hung out "banners" advertising "a strange calf, with five legs … or a huge lobster, with six claws"? The Third Neighbor replies that "We had gone in *then*" (5.1.7-9 emphasis mine), that is, when there was entertainment to be had rather than just an investigation of transgressive activities to perform. The entertainingly strange would have enticed them when their quotidian duty could not. Contrastingly, Doll keeps a careful watch on the neighborhood because she has a self-interested reason to do so, while in this humoral-less London the neighbors, as they seem to suggest, do not.[159] In the absence of the humoral logic promoting temperance and under the rule

[158] This is one the great achievements that Marlowe's Faust's believes he will be able to achieve, helping "whole cities" to escape "the plague" (1.1.21). Interestingly, Faust seems to seek a prophylactic protection against infection rather than cure after an outbreak. Faust's pact is not predicated on any model. However, the Alchemist's is, because, after all, Paracelsus' theory was used to create cures. Mammon is not, therefore, necessarily more ambitious than Faust. Rather, he is simply operating within a different model.

[159] Knocks at the door result in Doll's spying through the window (2.5.19, 3.3.77), Mammon's approach is spotted by Doll first (3.3.5.50), and it is Doll who tells Face that the gig is up: "Yes, but another is come, / You little looked for! … Your master: / The master of the house." Face calls her a liar, and she replies, "Look out, and see" (4.7.107-11). The gang keeps a lookout and Doll, among other duties, serves as that lookout. Further, she is aware of the threat that observation poses to her gang's disordered actions, "D'you know who hears you, Sovereign?" she asks, attempting to flatter Subtle, if not into silence, then at least into lowering his voice (1.1.87). Her question, in the

of the self-interested alchemical theory of the play, the participatory obligation that is at the essence of community (Esposito, "Communitas" 4-5) has almost entirely disappeared in the play's caustic reproduction.

Like *1 Henry IV, The Alchemist* stages the failure of the middling sources of authority to keep order. However, in Jonson's Plague-afflicted play there is no other source of order: no king organizing for war, no rebellion to oppose and organize against, no sheriff pursuing criminals, no Chief Justice threatening to punish miscreants, and no Hal investigating sources of disorder, becoming King, and judging the disordered occupants of East Cheap. Indeed, social organization is so fragmented in *The Alchemist* that the gang is barely able to organize itself. It was the middling sort, the masters and their deputies—like Lovewit, Dapper, the tobacco-man, or even Jeremy/Face—who were the necessary participants in the system of order and authority in the English community, particularly during plague outbreaks. Those who could not flee the Plague were the ones who would have found themselves taking greater authority during an outbreak. But in *The Alchemist*, nearly every character is driven to excess by ambition and greed that is the unifying motivation of the play; even the ostensible truth speaker, Surly, is himself a gamester, another type of grifter (Haynes 37), who attempts to secure the widow for himself (4.6).[160] This disordered condition of the social world will persist after the play's events, as Jeremy is not punished and the disordered injustices of the play are left unrectified. In fact, those injustices are capitalized on by the "Chekov's gun" of the returning master, who rather than correcting his

cheek-by-jowl world of early modern London, shows her awareness of the ease with which they might be discovered, and her fear of how well the proper order (of investigating neighbors) might function.

[160] Besides the conning gang, and master Lovewit' eagerness to appropriate their profits, there is Dapper, who comes to the Alchemist seeking favor from the Fairy Queen to help him best other gamblers using magic. The Drugger, seems to be the least gulling, but he comes to The Alchemist for help in attracting and manipulating his customers—help that would have almost certainly have been against rules governing fair trade. Sir Mammon of course wants the power of the philosopher's stone to achieve great wealth and power, and the Anabaptists want to use the Alchemist's power to make gold, Kastril wants to use it to make the best match for his sister, and Surly is a gamester who tries to make a move on Dame Pliant when he gets the chance.

disordered household coopts that disorder for his own gain, ensuring that such disorder will continue (Gilman 171).

While the new "alchemy" of Paracelsus is a partial scapegoat for the bad behavior found in the play, through the strawman of "The Alchemist" and his alchemical promises, humoral-like logics are not entirely absent. For instance, the disorders that breed disorder create a preexisting susceptibility (Gilman 171-2) that allows the gang to succeed: there are plenty of greedy gulls eager to believe The Alchemist's promises. But, in order for the gang to exploit the fragmented and self-interested citizens of London, Doll must put a stop to the quarrel of Subtle and Jeremy and establish order within the household (the only true order of the play until Lovewit returns). She does this through the semi-humoral technique of demanding that they evaluate their state: "are you sound [healthy]?"[161] She follows this a few lines later with, "will you be your own destruction?" (1.1.80-86, 98, 104). These very dramatic early questions are one of the few moments where the play seems to reflect the Plague afflicted London outside of Lovewit's house, and her challenges, calling for their temperate self-governance, finally get through to her confederates. Doll's order is semi-humoral, not because she invokes humors, but because she calls for their own self-diagnosis of their behavior as humoralism does while Paracelsianism calls for the monitoring of the body (I discuss this distinction in greater detail later in the chapter). Doll also threatens violence if they do not govern that behavior (135). The underlying humoral logics of self-governance, though corrupted, are shown as capable of social control, even in organizing to carry out an alchemy-centered con.

However, the rest of the social world of the play is decidedly not humoral and is instead intemperately organized around the near universal pursuit of personal gain, which alchemy

[161] Doll's interweaving the humoral and self-interest in support of the Alchemist's con is potentially a critique of English medicine that had been intertwined with Paracelsianism.

claims to be able to satisfy. Before the play begins, Lovewit has fled his wife's death (possibly of Plague), thus leaving Jeremy essentially out of service.[162] Of course, retreat was a common practice, and "there was unquestionably a good deal of disorder" as a result.[163] "Popular disorder," as Slack notes, "posed the greatest threat to the government's policy for public health," as those who remained, including the sick, refused to be contained when normal authority retreated (284).[164] In *The Alchemist*, that normal authority is itself corrupt and disordered. The unsettled ending of the play is a result, not just of the continuation of that corruption that the absence of punishment and restitution shows, but also of the persistence of disorder evident in the complete absence of community. All social relations are corrupted by instrumentality, like the mutually beneficial master-servant relationship of Lovewit and Jeremy that is reformed as they restart the household with a new Mrs. Lovewit. The members of the play's master class—Lovewit and Mammon chiefly—do not really fulfill their duty to correct the

[162] It is not made clear what Lovewit's wife died of. However, Plague and mistress Lovewit's death are intertwined suggestively. She is only mentioned once in the play when Subtle mocks Face's claim that the house as his "gift" to the gang's community. Subtle's response notes that it is (a) his master's house and (b) when Subtle and Doll found him, he was miserably alone with "the rats … and cobwebs … since your mistress's death hath broke up [the] house" (1.1.50-8). Face's reply, "You might talk softlier, rascal" (59) might indicate a request for respect of his dead mistress or indicate that he is afraid to let the neighbors know about the death within the household—during the argument Doll is acutely conscious of the neighbors' hearing what is being said. The mistress' death drove Lovewit from the house and city he is kept at bay by the death toll—if it is more than "one a week / O'the plague"—and until the necessary "airing o' the house" (1.1.182-3), which is a procedure performed to a house that was touched by Plague. However, when Lovewit returns and Jeremy leads him into the house he assures him that "It was not visited" with Plague (5.4.89). While perhaps mistress Lovewit died away from the house, this might also suggest that she did not die of plague, and therefore her death remains somewhat ambiguous.

[163] In *A Rod for Runaways* (1625) Dekker shows the conflict between the fearful self-interest that Plague produces, and the community of the household. In that conflict, "Father dares not come neere the infected Son, nor the Son come to take a blessing from the Father, lest hee bee poysoned by it: the Mother abhors to kisse her owne Children, or to touch the sides of her own Husband" (B). Out of fear of infection from plague, Dekker's family has quarantined themselves from each other, and in doing so denied the bonds of love, protection, or compassion they "owe" to each other. This is a breakdown in what Ferdinand Tönnies identifies as the quintessential *Gemeinshcaft* or community, the family and household (29).

[164] Even if authority did not completely disappear, as Cecil indicated in the 1563 orders, the authorities that remained were certainly preoccupied. In *The Alchemist* they are non-existent until the end, when the officers of the watch finally arrive to investigate Mammon's accusation of "Cheaters, bawds, conjurers" (5.5.2), which Lovewit's legitimate authority as householder dismisses—even though he was just moments before in disguise to finish the con of wooing Mistress Pliant.

disordered lower orders, as make that disorder their own.[165] This instrumental relationship is extended as the audience is invited into the play's world with the promise of a party with new gulls, as the old gulls are forgotten. In the play's final lines, Jeremy brags meta-theatrically that he has been tried, and even though guilty, he "clean / Got off." He concludes by placing himself under the audience's judgement, whom he attempts to bribe with promises to "invite new guests"—strangers to con—to the feasts he will hold for them (5.5.157-65). Jeremy has learned from Lovewit's outstripping of "An old man's gravity, or strict canon" of right and wrong, law and order, that the temptations of "a young wife" or bilking "new guests" are not to be resisted (153-55). This is the consequences of the rationale of Lovewit's being "A little indulgent" of Jeremy's "wit"—ambitious conning—that has helped Lovewit's own "fortune." In allowing the "strain / Of his own candour" or reputation by not punishing his servant (149-50), Lovewit emboldens Jeremy, it seems. Thus, he encourages more disorder while simultaneously dismissing any notion of obligation to correct either Jeremy, Subtle, or Doll, or make restitution to any of the gulls of the play.

The victims of the con, the powerless poor and the dead, are forgotten—the dead do not have a place in The Alchemist's plans that become Lovewit's, and the victims have already been gulled. The gulled and the dead, are forgotten, as they have nothing left to give. The powerless, those with nothing to offer, are dismissed by the coming of the legitimate-legal but also corrupt master, as all community is denied, and as it becomes clear that no gift is offered without the expectation of return. Subtle and Doll, "the specter[s] of poverty itself, in its urban form, …

[165] *Henry IV*'s comedic parts are the moments when the prince seems to be actually joining in the lower order's disorder, but the promise of Henry V's future, which was a well-known history, offers a corrective to these disordered moments that are at least partially framed in humoral terms—as I discuss in chapter two.

lumpen, [are] utterly outside society and nearly expelled from life itself" (Haynes 31).[166] They are only *very* slightly more significant—because Jeremy might actually fulfill his promise to find them later—at the end of the play than the forgotten dead, including Lovewit's dead first wife. Likewise, the obligatory obedience of the pliant widow is emptied of humanity: this "mammet" or puppet, will do as her brother "will ha[ve]" her do, but once committed to Lovewit, she does not even respond to her brother's questioning complaints (4.6.36; 5.5.125-9).[167] Within the world of *The Alchemist*, this widow is the impossibly, absurdly, and perfectly compliant, chattel-like unreal-woman (as sister/widow or wife) who is the opposite of the far more active and authoritative realistic Doll. Doll brings order to the disorder ambitions of the schemers and participates, sharing equally (in theory) in the profits, while Pliant is just another object, and thus victim, within the disordered game of acquisition at the heart of the play. She has more in common with the plague dead than the living Doll.[168]

In this Plagued London, what is conspicuously lacking in *The Alchemist*'s world is the recognition of the sacrifice, not just of the Plague victims, but in the proper administration of punishment, poison, or *pharmakon*, and the lack of concordant acceptance of obligation (*munus*) by the living.[169] Subtle's and Doll's ready retreat and the losses of those they conned are not sacrifices or obligations, though they could be if they were not summarily dismissed from the

[166] They are not even proper scapegoats as Lovewit continues their activities to its conclusion and Jeremy promises a repeat performance.
[167] Her brother orders her around with threats to force her to "kuss" Surly (4.6.74-5) and her only reply to Surly's later suggestion that she consider him for a husband is a simple, "I will, sir" (4.6.15).
[168] It might be tempting to see Dame Pliant as the sacrifice, and even a willing sacrifice, but it is difficult to see how she has any other options, and instead simply drifts upon the currents of the wants and desires of others.
[169] The only traditional acceptance of the debt owed to community and of one's larger obligations come from Jeremy to Lovewit, and to a lesser degree from the master to the servant. Jeremy recognizes that serving his master is the only way he avoids punishment, and Lovewit realizes that protecting his servant nets him a rich widow. But their acceptance and proceeding with the plan denies the possibility that Subtle and Doll can function as scapegoats and carry the blame for the disorder of the play, thus acting as the *pharmakoi* or the containers of blame that immunize the rest of the characters.

play's happy ending. Instead, like Dame Pliant's and those of the Plague-dead, and Lovewit's wife's death that drove him from London, they are essentially inconsequential and elided from the continuing social world of the play, as Jeremy promises to feast the "kind spectators" often and bring "new guests" (5.5. 153, 165) to replace the already forgotten old ones who might as well be dead.[170] This relationship to the dead is explained in Jonson's dedicatory letter to Lady Wroth, which frames the play in relation to "the age of sacrifices" (1), the time of Plague deaths. The world of *The Alchemist*, however, contains no sacrifices and no remembrance of the devotion and zeal of the dead as examples for the living—the play ignores the logic of the *pharmakoi*. In confronting the "*hecatomb*" (massive grave) of a Plague infected London, Jonson explains that it was "*not* in the greatness and fat of the offerings"—the number of the dead—"but in the devotion and zeal of the sacrificers" of the past, that is, the remembrance of their sacrifice and the "devotion and zeal" of the living (1-3).[171] Jonson's own young son died of Plague in the 1603 outbreak while he was safe within the immunity of a patron's country estate. Gilman argues that, as a consequence, Jonson believed victims were a necessary and thus not to be forgotten sacrifice for the greater good (135). Introducing the play, Jonson declares that these times—like his play—are bereft of examples modeling correct behavior when the dead in their hecatombs are ignored in a denial of community. Such remembrance can obviously be understood through humoral logics of role models of temperance (and piety).[172] Jean-Luc Nancy notes that the absence of community is evident when "… the death of each of us … [is] no longer anything more than the death of the individual," and this death, Nancy says, "carries an unbearable burden

[170] Dame Pliant, might serve as a sacrifice but she is almost erased from the play's social world, thus she can offer no lesson, as her fate is, seemingly, no more important than stolen coin.
[171] This sort of thinking that produces what Gilman sees a psychotic structure within early modern theodicy (69).
[172] When Hal takes Hotspur's honors he does so after he has punishing his rebellion by killing him, but he still laments his loss as well as the falsified death of Falstaff.

and collapses into insignificance" (1). In *The Alchemist*'s critique, community is denied, as is the sacrifice of the insignificant dead, as are the losses suffered by the already gulled, who can no longer serve the dominant alchemical-economic instrumentality of the play. All sacrifice and suffering is forgotten at the end of the play.

The Alchemist's (and now Jeremy's) promise is to the living, economically viable individual, but the alchemy of the play requires no sacrifice, and therefore is antithetical to the formation of community. In Derrida's reading of Plato, the sacrificial *pharmakoi* is for the benefit of the living community. Indeed, there can be no sacrifice without memory of that sacrifice within the community, as "the only possible community is one cemented by sacrifice" that acknowledges the obligation, the obligatory gift (*munus*) around which community is formed. It is death that gives meaning to community (Esposito, "Communitas" 35, 14-16, 4-8; Nancy 1-9).[173] "Death is indissociable from community, for it is through death that the community reveals itself—and reciprocally." There can be no community without death *and* no meaningful death without community, this is at the heart of the community's "logic of sacrifice" (Nancy 14, 12). The *munus*, death is the ultimate-gift/sacrifice, because there can be no reciprocation, no reward, except in the expectation of the community's remembrance. But, in *The Alchemist* only the prospect of gain has any meaning, and the terms of the play's absences are tied to the implicit conflict of ideologies between the alchemical and humoral, as each is configured within the play. Alchemy promises easy and relatively painless gain, and limitless

[173] In this way the sacrifice is distinct from the bare life of zoé (Esposito "Terms" 61), thus Jean-Luc Nancy argues the Nazi regime needed the sacrifices for the state in the form of heroes to counter the raw *zoé* of the prisoners (12). Esposito's theorization of community keys on the *munus* of the obligatory gift-debt that members owe to the community ("Communitas" 7-8). A key difference between Esposito and Nancy is that for the latter, community is a positive source of meaning for the individual (12). In contrast, Esposito describes community as threatened by a loss of freedom that makes the obligation of *munus* a potential violence when it is corrupted by the immunity of some rather than the shared immunity of all against the nothingness of an individual death that Nancy describes. Put another way, when there are those in power who "owe nothing to anyone" who are exempt from "the obligation of the *munus*" ("Communitas" 33; "Terms" 39 "Immunitas" 16, 5).

potential, that in the play is a disruptively irresistible temptation for nearly every character. The humoral, through Doll's successful use of it practices to promote self-governance and its conspicuous absence is an implicit answer to the disorder producing alchemy. The play's conclusion looks forward to a future much like the disorder that came before it, while the Plague dead, Lovewit's dead wife, Dame Pliant, the interest of those who have been conned, and the masterless suburban poor, Subtle and Doll, are all forgotten. It is, therefore, not just that Jeremy is not punished or that Lovewit allows the rest of the gang to escape uncorrected (but without the profits), nor that the play's disordered gulling and plagued world will almost certainly continue as it is, but that there is no *munus* (no gift-duty) and no memory of sacrifice (no *pharmakon* or *pharmakoi*).

SECTION II: To Plague with "willful cholor"

The Alchemist's demonization of the alchemical in favor of the humoral leads to an unresolved ending that cynically includes the audience—with the suggestion that they might accept Jeremy's invitation—in a critique of the play's ongoing self-interest driven society. Shakespeare, on the other hand, contains the disorders and plagues of his Verona in *Romeo and Juliet* by providing a mostly complete resolution to the chief disorder of the play. This resolution, and the resolution found in *Timon of Athens*, are both rooted in a blending of the humoral and *pharma*-logical metaphors in confrontation with crises that are decidedly plagued. The plagued politics found in Shakespeare's working through the English blending of Paracelsian and the humoral tradition comes into greater focus when contextualized by the recorded tragedy of the Dawson household in the small village of Barthomley during the summer

of 1625.[174] Raffe Dawson's flight from Plague ravaged London for the safe confines of his father's home, and his unconditional welcome back into the family community on the twenty-fifth of July, had disastrous consequences. Over the next six weeks plague spread through the household killing John Dawson senior and junior, John junior's wife, Elizabeth, a brother Richarde and an uncle Richarde, two sisters, and two servants. The unusual detail of the record memorializing uncle Richarde's death in particular offers insight into Shakespeare's tragic and plaguey deaths in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Timon of Athens*.

"Richarde Dawson, … being sicke of the plague, and perceiving he must die at this time, arose out of his bed, and made his grave, and caused his nephew John Dawson …[to] cast straw into the grave … and [then] went in laid him down in the said grave, and … so departed out of this world" (Lysons and Lysons 846). Surrounded by the already buried dead in the yard, Richarde accepted his suffering and ultimate death. The straw for his comfort was an afterthought, a request made of John who would survive him, if only for a few days. At this point, whether Richarde had been quarantined by the authorities of Barthomley no longer mattered, he had quarantined himself and his diseased soon-to-be corpse by half-burying himself. The report couches this in terms of the inability of those left alive at the house to bury him.[175] But, if John and Rose could not bury him, then Richarde's concern was not for them but for the watcher(s) and his community (as they most certainly would have understood) who would have

[174] The record identifies them as "the Dawsons of Bradley" emphasizing that they had migrated at some point the thirty or so miles between the two villages and were ultimately still thought of as outsiders.

[175] There seems to be an echo of this in Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* when H. F., the narrator, repeatedly insists that even during the peak of Plague deaths that London was always capable of burying her dead. It is as if this is some sort of measure of a viable community, the ability to contain the organic-biological realities, like death, in caring for its members. Without the heroics of Richarde, the Dawsons would not have been a viable community by this measure. No reference is made to how or who buried John Jr., that Richarde's story is shared and not John Jr's suggests that he did not bury himself but was perhaps buried by the remaining servant Rose who died over a week later. The name of the man who buried the last member of the household, the servant Rose, is recorded indicating an interest in keeping track of those who were exposed to infection and perhaps recording those who put themselves at risk (performing their duty) for the good of the community (846).

to deal with his heavy, potentially dangerous body instead. The sacrificial act was a social and community-centered one. Those who were quarantined in their houses in London (and to the city itself) were likewise expected to accept their death as Richarde did (and as Raffe did not, thus creating this tragic disaster) to protect the members of the community who were not afflicted. Watchers were only appointed *if* the quarantined seemed inclined not to obey. The small comfort of food from their neighbors as the Plague ran its course was a tacit acknowledgement of the sick and dying's continued place within the community. However, this small comfort was approaching the true gift (*munus*) of community, the gift with no expectation of reciprocation—the donated food for the dead was meant to ensure that they obeyed the quarantine. It is Richard's death and the willing obedience of the quarantined that is the true gift to the community, one that he or they could not know would be reciprocated in anyway, a gift which was nevertheless, in this case, remembered.

The record of Richarde's death produces three crucial concepts for understanding the politics of the plague death. Richarde willingly assumes his "debt" (*munus*) to the community.[176] He thus becomes the willing emblem of the healing sacrifice, preserving the health of the community with his own heroic suffering and death from within, becoming more than merely the Plague-poison (*pharmakon*). Richarde is the *pharmakos* who is still a member of the community. The recorded aspects of his death contain the fact of his continued significance and connection to the community—both in his willing acceptance and in the record's memorialization of that acceptance. Unlike the unwilling *pharmakon*, Richarde participates in his own sacrifice as both the lovers, Romeo and Juliet, do and Timon does.

[176] In doing so he takes responsibility for and counters the disorder itself, becoming the pharmakon, the evil that poisons and sickens the community, but that can also cure it.

Part I: From the Grave: "a plague o'both your houses"

The play's plaguing of Romeo's and Juliet's sacrificial correction of Verona's disorders begins with the play's investment in humoral theory. The argument of this reading of *Romeo and Juliet* begins with a description of the humoral logics of the balancing choleric passions of hate and love that dominate the play.[177] Following that, I explore the ways in which the play does not entirely conform to humoral theories of health (as political metaphors), and how, in working through the sacrifice of the two young lovers, it also explores the curative uses of poison. Finally, I turn to the failures of authority within the play to explain how the lover's community created by Romeo and Juliet provides a possible cure for the sources of disorder afflicting Verona. This is a cure that intermingles the humoral with Paracelsian logics.

Romeo and Juliet is clearly also very much invested in humoral theory. It opens with Sampson's and Gregory's punning on their hotheaded condition: they "carry coals" or are "colliers" since they "be in a choler" and the threat of the "collar" of the hangman does not stop their unbalanced humors from "being mov'd" when they "strike … a dog of the house of Montague" (1.1.1-14). Their puns revolve around one of the four chief humors, choler, associated with bile that is hot and dry in nature. Choler is characterized by an irritable temperament that is quick to anger, a temperament exposed in the ready turn towards conflict as the Montague men enter the stage. Even Benvolio echoes the humoral language circulating within the scene as he reports that he "Pursued" his more moderate "humor" not the hotheaded Capulet Tybalt's (129) and resisted an altercation. Onto the stage so recently filled with the riot

[177] Psychologist Cynthia Whissel's essay, "Emotion and the Humors: Scoring and Classifying Major Characters from Shakespeare's Comedies on the Basis of their Language" offers an excellent schematic of the humoral-emotional world of Shakespeare (815).

of the hate-humors from the warring noble factions, Romeo introduces another hot humor, love for Rosaline (1.1.176) which he connects to the "fray" that started the scene:

> Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.
>
> Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
>
> O anything, of nothing first created!
>
> O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
>
> Misshapen chaos of well[-seeing] forms,
>
> Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,
>
> Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
>
> This love feel I, that feel no love in this. (175-81)

The connection he makes to the conflict at the center of the play is through Petrarchan humorally-imbalanced tropes "O brawling love! O loving hate!" as he professes his passion for love and Rosaline over hate of Capulets—a passion that intensifies when he falls in love with Juliet.[178] Romeo's whimsical-seeming speech, is filled with connected oppositions in search of harmony, as he balances unlike with unlike, and as his appearance counters passionate hate with passionate love. Romeo's hunt for equilibrium in opposition through the two emotions, hate and love, creates a partial, momentary balance between dry-heat in the former choleric (yellow bile) humor and moist-heat in the latter sanguine (blood) humor. The play will show that such incomplete balancing is at best temporary, as the feuding houses continue to destabilize the polis, and only the final coldness of loving-death (counteracting the poisonous heat of both humors)

[178] Worth noting that Rosaline is later an invited guest to the Capulet ball, and thus potentially, like Juliet, of the opposition's camp. Thus, Romeo connects his "first" love to the conflict between the two houses, which of course, becomes an even clearer problem with Juliet.

succeeds in balancing the nearly ungovernable hot humors of living-hate afflicting the city.[179] Even Prince Escalus' response to open fighting in the street ignores any equitable rationale for Romeo's actions, as well as Escalus' own bonds of kinship to the avenged Mercutio, when he summarily banishes the son of Montague, thereby maintaining the hate-filled oppositions in the city (3.2.180-91).[180] The Prince's attempt to govern is yet another human effort to establish order that fails, as Romeo does not stay banished.[181]

This humoral imbalance is a consistent threat to order throughout the play. A few scenes later, Lord Capulet manages to briefly govern the hot Tybalt's "willful cholor" and keep him from creating a "mutiny among my guests" (1.5.80).[182] The hot-tempered youth, confronting Capulet's command for "patience perforce," cannot overcome the "willful choler" that, he says, "Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting." To manage his humor, Tybalt's only recourse is to "withdraw" and quarantine himself and his humor from the "intrusion" (1.5.89-92).[183] This moment exposes, once again the comingling of early modern medical theories, humoralism's temperate balance as the source of health denies the need for quarantine, but

[179] In his article "Love, Sex and Death in *Romeo and Juliet*," Clayton G. MacKenzie argues that the tragic connection between love and death in the play is rooted in the figure of "Cupid's capacity for destruction" (25). However, his reading, while compelling, overlooks the mechanisms of destruction that is the Plague and political disorder of the play. It is not love, but the blockage of that love that causes death. Mercutio does not declare that "Cupid should destroy both your houses." Perhaps, an argument might be made for a sort of Cupid's plague but that turns Mercutio's curse into comedy and ignores the presence of Plague within the city and the fact that it is the Plague quarantine, part of the "plague"-assemblage, that carries out Mercutio's curse.

[180] The civil strife kills three men, Mercutio, Tybalt, and Paris, two of them related to the Prince. This shows that the disorder threatens to enmesh the monarch's family, but also, establishes that the conflict is at the aristocratic level, while the Plague threatened the lower order.

[181] Worth noting, the watch's effort while it does not "fail" is only a temporary cessation of the conflict as Paris will attack Romeo before Juliet's tomb. Slack notes that violations to the *Plague Orders* were treated like breaches to the peace (212), for early modern England the two sources of disorder were legal kin.
Also, one answer for why Escalus does not stop the feuding houses is that they are creating balance, and the fight and deaths cause imbalance as one side becomes more powerful. Thus, perhaps Prince's cousins taking opposing sides within the conflict is a tacit attempt to keep the conflict between the two houses balanced.

[182] Glenn Clark notes that there is a clear parallel between the mutinous servants to their masters, and those feuding masters' relationship to the Prince (287); the play's political world is one of nested political relationships that mirror each other as the rebellious households confront internal rebellion.

[183]

waning miasma theory and Paracelsus offers notions of an external threat to those whose humors might be unbalanced enough to render them suceptable. When the play's other hot youth, Romeo, kisses Juliet, violating their fathers' segregation, he declares that his "sin is purg'd" but perhaps infectiously so as Juliet wonders if it is now on her lips (106-108). Passion becomes potentially infectious, as if the humors of both hate and love need to be potentially quarantined, blending medical rationales.[184] Immediately after Romeo leaves, Juliet causally links their love to death, commanding that the Nurse go "ask his name" adding, "If he be married, / My grave is like to be my wedding-bed" (lines). Upon learning that he is a Montague, she laments, "my only love [has] sprung from my only hate!" (134-8), situating their young love within the humoral opposition between love and hate. The hot humors of love and hate resist control during the Capulet ball, and Juliet's off-handed hyperbole introduces the strange possibility their love will result in (cold) death, foreshadowing the play's humor balancing resolution.[185]

The play follows the humoral into a hoped-for balancing that is, however, incomplete, while love balances hate, both humors are hot, thus imbalanced. After the lovers meet, Mercutio tries to "conjure" Romeo, who has gone off to find Juliet: "Romeo! *humors*! madman! passion! lover!" (2.1.7; emphasis added), framing him as Tybalt's opposite. Two scenes later, Friar Lawrence diagnoses Romeo: "a distempered head … up-rous'd with some distemp'rature" by passion to be out so early in the morning (2.3.33-40). As the chorus to the second act notes, referring to Romeo and Juliet, "passion lends them power," "Temp'ring extremities" of hate "with extreme sweet" (13-4). Love tempers disruptive hate, and each passion is intertwined with

[184] It can be tempting to make more of this sort of double-entendre alluding to venereal disease, but again, such infection was a lesser plague part of the possible preconditions for the Plague.
[185] Later when the Nurse, returns with a message from Romeo setting the time for their marriage, she answers Juliet's eagerness with "Are you so hot" with love? (2.5.62).

"plague" through Mercutio's hate-caused death and subsequent "*a* plague" curse.[186] In the midst of the Plague outbreak that has brought the Barefoot Brother to Verona to tend to the sick (5.2.7), Romeo echoes the Chorus' curing oppositions of love and hate: Juliet's love is the "fair sun" that might "kill the envious moon, / Who is already sick," as Verona is, "and pale with grief" (2.2.1-5). The "sun" of their love can banish the night that covers "fair Verona" and "kill" the sickly pale "inconsistent moon" (109), overcoming the hatred between their houses. Friar Lawrence agrees, as he offers his help to the eloping couple so that "this alliance may so happy prove / To turn your households' rancor to pure love" (2.3.91-2). Thus, both Lawrence and Romeo imagine that the related humors are a possible balance of dry-hot hatred versus wet-hot, love, ignoring the dangerous heat.[187]

However, dominant humoralism is in the play, it does so with a consistent intermingling of the humoral and loose-Paracelsianism that begins in the second scene, when Benvolio frames one pair of competing humors as, in-part, a poison. In his conversation with Romeo about his love of Rosaline: Benvolio answers Romeo's earlier claim that he cannot be taught to forget her (1.1.236-7), admonishing, "Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning" (1.2.45). His statement references the Paracelsian logic of like curing like, poison to cure poison, as becomes clear when he continues: "One Desperate grief cures with another's languish: / Take though some new *infection* to thy eye, / and the rank of *poison* of the old will die" (46-50; emphasis added). The logics here are *not* of humoral moderation through the balancing of "delight with dole" that Claudius deploys in *Hamlet* (1.1.13) for example, but of infection/poison to balance

[186] Of course, it is not Plague that ultimately leads to the young lovers' death, but the human misdiagnosis and quarantine that critics of the Plague Orders like Middleton, railed against. The fact that it is human misdiagnosis that finalizes the play's tragedy expresses the very real difficulty confronting the Plagued. Human diagnostic efforts, like the humoral, were at best uncertain. Thus, there was a certain urgency to any and every exploration of health and Plague even the fictional.

[187] The heat of the Summer in the midst of a Plague outbreak, remains unmediated, until death and fall chill provides the final cure.

and cure poison/infection. This early passage shows Benvolio thinking through the application of Paracelsian-like metaphors to understand what will become one of the core sources of humoral imbalance and disorder that drives the plot of the play, Romeo's passionate—but initially fickle—love. Further, Mercutio's curse of more death (Plague) as revenge for his own death, is of course fundamentally Paracelsian as it calls for the injection of something poisonous into Verona to avenge his death, righting the imbalanced injustice of his death.[188]

However, Friar Lawrence, the source of the play's complication, does not only view health and medicine through a strictly humoral lens, but also considers the nature of cures within poison as he contemplates a theory that is decidedly Paracelsian (see footnote 39 above): "virtue itself turns vice" and thus vice might turn virtue. Just after Romeo's entrance, the Friar remarks about one of the blossoms he has harvested, "Within the infant rind of this weak flower / Poison hath residence and medicine power" (2.3.23-4). Poison has power, Lawrence theorizes, and virtue can become vice if misapplied and the reverse configuration is also true, vice become virtue if properly applied. Instead of strictly opposites balancing, Lawrence is thinking through poison that is not always poison but "medicine power." He theorizes that the vice of applied poison or resistance to authority might correct as poisonous medicine might—as Mercutio seems to hope Plague will do by avenging his unfair death. Further, just two scenes earlier, the Chorus had declared that the young lovers' passions lent them a general power, as the Friar says poison

[188] According to Paracelsus "A poison is concealed beneath the goodness in everything which man takes as his nourishment" ("Medicinae" 51). Writing about "alchimia" Paracelsus outlines his program: "Who is there who would deny that in all good things poison also resides? Everyone must acknowledge this. This being the case, the question I ask is: must one then not separate the poison from what is good, taking the good and leaving what is bad? Of course one must" ("Paragranum" 247).
The good ("nourishment") and the poison are intertwined, might come from the same place, and be within the same compound, and it is the alchemist or medical expert's task to sort the one from the other. Mercutio's curse, rather than seeking to balance his death or the hate that promoted it, instead invoked potentially more death, more poison, and thus more conforms to Paracelsian logics of poisoning the organs of the Verona political state—the houses of Capulet and Montague.

from the plant has. As Lawrence continues he connects the problem of his weeded garden to the political situation of "Two such opposed kings encamp[ed]"—Capulet and Montague—who might like the poison, bring "death [that] eats up the plant" of Verona (27-30), or Romeo's and Juliet's love (Pollard 98). Within the musings of the Friar, who hopes to find a cure, perhaps a sort of poison cure, for the disordered state, conceptual frameworks overlap as general virtue and vice are related to plants *and* the local factional conflict in Plague stricken Verona.[189] Learning of Romeo's and Juliet's love, he imagines that the young lovers, seemingly ruled by their fathers, if freed, might correct their fathers' old hate and restrictive rule, and the vice of their disobedience become the virtue that cures the city's disordered state.

Like the Plague environs, which are simultaneously disordered, as the normal order is set aside, and overly ordered, as the invasive and pervasive plague order inspects and contains, Verona is both disordered by the feud between its two noble houses and overly ordered by that separation and the plague regime that has been put in effect throughout the city. The key ordering of the play is the twin containments that both fail: the one keeping two families separate, and the other keeping Plague contained. Romeo and Juliet circumvent the first and escape, and the Plague quarantine contains nothing and instead fails to block the play's tragedy, as Friar John's containment proves to be needless.[190] Their fathers' misrule creates the circumstance within which the love of Romeo and Juliet becomes a quest for freedom from the oppressive system that they live within (Kottman 5). The lovers' desperate escape from the hopelessness of their over-ordered social world is foiled by the over-ingenuity of Friar Lawrence, and instead of escaping to living love together, their freedom is found in the grave. Romeo and

[189] Gerry Brenner's argument that Friar Lawrence helps Romeo and Juliet to serve his own ambitions (48) misses the potency of medical metaphors for managing political discord.
[190] This quarantine is a misapplied good that turns poisonous, and, perhaps, also perpetuates the general hostility towards such quarantine.

Juliet, like Richarde Dawson, accept death to maintain the community they have formed together. The quarantines of the Plague-ridden play backfire. Men follow their masters' hatred rather than the city's laws, or the Prince's will as Romeo's and Juliet's love will take precedence over their fathers' hate.

The rulers of Verona, the noble fathers and Prince, exercise an authority largely unmediated by the equity of those being ruled. Prince Escalus' rule is rather similar to the *Plague Orders*, and the Plague's presence within the city might explain his capriciousness in refusing to consider Romeo's reason for killing Tybalt. Likewise, when later the young lovers and their conspirators (the Nurse and Friar) have little hope that the fathers' hatred might be reasoned with to allow the two to marry, as Juliet's father considers her love his possession (Wallace 332), it is part of this same authoritarian mode of governance.[191] Those in authority give little indication of the debt of good governance that they owe, and in response, Romeo and Juliet ultimately deny the debt of obedience that they owe. Law and authority struggle to govern the mutinies of passion, love and hate, that creates "the play's tragic sense of disorder" (Clark 281). The humors of the play overrule rational attempts to produce order, and they fracture community obligations—like the Plague did. This connection is made fictionally concrete when that sense of disorder is exacerbated by the revelation of Plague in the city in act five that also ensures the play's tragic resolution. Finally, the deaths of Romeo and Juliet disrupt the feuding fathers' causeless hate that is "withdrawn … from the pleasures and dangers of living" (Spellberg 65). The fathers ignore the potential pleasures the young lovers represent and their deaths are the consequential dangers their fathers' (and prince's) bad governance ignored in favor of exercising their own will, doing so from a position of immunity from the dangerous passions of the play.

[191] The city *is* in a state of emergency with the presence of Plague, thus this political mode makes sense. Nevertheless, the play seems to offer a critique of that emergency authority.

Romeo and Juliet, long thought of as a critique of Elizabethan culture and authority (Herman 213), echoes *The Alchemist*'s skepticism concerning human authority in confrontation with the Plague. [192] When Friar John asks the Barefoot Brother to accompany him in delivering the letter to Romeo, the play reveals that he came to the city to minster to Plague victims. Of course, it is not inconsequential that in the midst of aristocratic feuding the city confronts a significant Plague outbreak. While critics have generally overlooked or even been surprised by the Plague's presence within the play, it was anything but "unprepared-for" (Rozett 155): "Here in this city visiting the sick," was the monk called the Barefoot Brother, whose association taints Friar John with suspicion of being infected. The passage shows that the searchers are active within the city, "And finding him [the Barefoot Brother], the searchers of the town, / Suspecting that we both were in a house / where the infectious pestilence did reign, / Sealed up the doors, and would not let us forth" (5.2.5-12). The city has been under an ongoing Plague threat long enough and of sufficient virulence that word has spread beyond the city, bringing those like the Barefoot Brother *and* causing city officials to institute strict search and quarantine procedures. This brief mention of Plague belies the significance and severity of the Plague's impact upon Verona, which certainly would not have been overlooked by contemporaries who had just lived through such a visitation a few years earlier. The critique of authority within the play is inherently the critique of authority both in its confrontation with *and* failure to confront Plague, as the play's governance both fails to confront the humoral disorders of the city and quarantines the non-plagued.

[192] Like Jonson's London, Shakespeare's Verona is the opposite of the "Galenic 'no place' [utopia] that was safe from plague … [because] emotions were temperate, and the citizens regulated their habits in every area of life" (Totaro 56).

When suspicion of Plague causes the quarantine of Friar Lawrence's messenger, his plan to free the young lovers from their father's control is disrupted and Romeo hears only that Juliet is dead (5.1). This precedes Friar John's explanation of the Plague's presence. For a couple of dozen lines Romeo's ignorance of Friar Lawrence's plan is puzzling, and as Friar John gives his explanation, the audience "might well recall the 'star-cross'd lovers' of the prologue to Act I" (Gilman 36) and suspect that the Plague-assemblage—as if following Mercutio's curse—had taken aim at the young lovers.[193] As Gilman goes on to note, "in the 1590s it is still possible to believe that the pestilence is caused by some disastrous conjunction in the heavens" (36). However, this quarantine that stops the message to Romeo, in effect, is the "immunitary mechanism [that] presupposes the existence of the ills it is meant to counter" (Esposito, "Immunitas" 8). The searchers must find Plague to quarantine the plagued. In this moment, the key feature of the plague-assemblage is the man-made quarantine that provides the consummation of Mercutio's "plaguing" curses that ensures that *Romeo and Juliet* ends tragically. Thus, it is the disorder and simultaneously over-ordered Plague environ that fulfills Mercutio's curse, rather than the Plague itself.

The curse disrupts the regime of separation between the two houses even as it rejects bonds of community between him and Romeo, treating both feuding houses equally. The "plague" curse is mirrored by the humoral disruptions of love and hate: Romeo and Juliet meet despite their father's quarantine-like feud that requires that they hate each other, *and* Tybalt and Mercutio fight despite the fact that "the Prince expressly hath / Forbid" it (3.1.82-3). This disobedience that Romeo attempts to stop, inaugurates the play's tragedy. "I am hurt / A plague O'both your houses, I am sped" (5.1.86-7), Mercutio declares, after being struck by Tybalt from

[193] In *Wonderful Yeare* Dekker includes the officials of the *Orders* among the host of the Plague (15).

under Romeo's arm. In attempting to restrain Mercutio, Montague and Capulet unite into one danger—as Plague and quarantine were often thought to do, and as they do within the play when Friar John is quarantined. Mercutio introduces the notion of "plague" as a punishment within his invective against women whom the "angry Mab with blisters plagues / Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are" (1.4.75-6). They are punished, according to Mercutio, for indulging their sweet tooth upon the luxury of candy, rather than following a more stoic or restrained self-governance.[194] In his next invocation of the plague, Mercutio condemns equally both him who killed him and his friend who was instrumental in providing the opportunity for the mortal blow to be struck. He is concerned with the unbalanced result of the conflict, asking, "Is he gone, and hath nothing?" (3.1.92).

With the second repetition of "A plague o'*both* your houses!" (99 emphasis mine) Mercutio calls forth a mode of governing that might set to right the bad governance of the Montagues and the Capulets. As he continues, Mercutio's obsession with the imbalance that such "a rat"—Tybalt—could "scratch a man to death!" expresses his frustration with the disordered state of Verona. Plague is the only remedy when a "braggart, … [who] fights by the book," and was therefore no threat to Mercutio, has instead killed him; the implication seems to be that Tybalt fights in a predictable overly-ordered way and Mercutio is an expert who is beyond "by the book" fighting. "Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm" (90-8) otherwise, Mercutio claims, the matter was well in hand, and if Romeo had not intervened all would be well.[195] The living houses of Romeo and Tybalt, which together produce such

[194] Candy was thought to be a potential inducement to Plague (Slack 28-9).
[195] Plague-like, the play is dominated by inscrutable chance (Weinberger 352): the fathers' hate has no clear cause and instead seems like just bad luck after Romeo and Juliet have met, also by chance; Mercutio is killed by chance; Romeo's banishment is more the capricious response of a frustrated prince than the fair judgment of a leader; the plague's presence and the watch's quarantine are bad luck; even Paris' meeting Romeo before his suicide rather than after as Juliet wakes up is just bad luck for Paris.

disordered imbalances as an inept fighter like Tybalt killing a skilled fighter like Mercutio, become subject to Mercutio's revenge (and perhaps judgement), as he curses them with "a plague" that can punish both houses. Mercutio's three "plague" invocations are a threat from a man who, going to his death, rejects all community and instead calls down suffering and death on those he has been attached to, those who have collectively killed him. The curse becomes the memory of a threat that could destroy a household (like the Dawsons') as it echoes through the rest of the play until many others have joined Mercutio in death.[196]

Mercutio's perhaps corrective and certainly retaliatory plague invocation is not an idle one, and as Gilman notes, the curse "conjures up the specter of domestic quarantine" (36), which Dekker describes as a "mortall siege of the plague" that allowed many to die who, if provided with aid and comfort, may have survived.[197] The human effort to combat the plague is a procedure Dekker links with the executioner's work: "the drawing windows were hangd, drawne and quartered" (14, 18).[198] The unlucky poor were restrained and exposed to Plague while the lucky watched, and the more affluent households circumvented quarantine through bribery of the watchman, paying someone to stay with their relative, or just escaping.[199] In Verona, power

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Plague, is the ultimate unlucky death that, despite all the human theories, remained, ultimately, entirely capricious—early moderns may have used humoral, miasmic, Paracelsian, or pious rationales to justify one death over another, but since these were not the mechanisms of Plague, exceptions were always to be found: the impious, humorally intemperate, people who lived near the sewer survived and healthy infant children of medical practitioners trained in humoral or later Paracelsianism died.

[196] It is easy to imagine some version of Mercutio's curse echoing from the suffering quarantine victims: "a plague on all your houses" would not be Richarde's words, but they would be many peoples'.

[197] Dekker describes this in his popular pamphlet about the 1603 outbreak, The Wonderful Yeare.

[198] This allusion is to the gruesome death sentence of being publicly drawn through the streets, hanged, then organs drawn out and subsequently chopped into quarters. This punishment was a spectacle from beginning to end, beginning with the living prisoner and ending with their publicly displayed parts. Dekker's allusion implies that quarantine was somehow similar, as spectators saw the house closed up and shades "drawn" and the household was forcibly "quartered" within the house, with the plague mark on the door and watchman to secure it. In the end, as the quartered bodies of the executed are placed so that all could see the gruesome effects of "justice," the emptying of the bodies from quarantined houses testified to the Plague's power and human government's relative success of containment to the survivors.

[199] John Fletcher dramatizes this in his sequel to *Taming of the Shrew*: when Maria's family come and discover that Petruchio's "plagued," they back away *and* recommend that she lock him up and said a woman into care for him

flows unidirectionally as it did during Plague-governance: the Prince suppresses the hate between Capulet and Montague without investigating the causes or seeking a resolution, and he banishes Romeo without regard for any mitigating circumstances. Within this atmosphere, Friar Laurence, Nurse, Romeo, and Juliet all seem to expect the fathers to reject their children's love of each other, and it is only in Romeo's and Juliet's sacrificial death (Clark 285) that their will must be accepted by their fathers who then relent and obey the Prince's demands for an end to their feud.[200] As I will show, play produces a remembrance of the sacrificed as a correction of the failures of governance that made such sacrifices necessary.

The lovers' deaths allow each to model equally willing sacrificial devotion to their lovers' community—their acceptance of their obligation to each other, even to death, is an example of fulfilling the ultimate debt, somewhat as Richarde does. Romeo comes to Juliet's "grave" to kill himself, this willing self-sacrifice of ingesting poison so important that he kills Paris instead of letting himself be killed by him.[201] Shakespeare's couple likely consummated their "marriage" off stage (3.5) and Juliet dies "sheath" for Romeo's "happy dagger" (5.3.168-9) as "sexual union in marriage and union in death, become completely and finally, indistinguishable" (Catlin 192).[202] Paul Kottman argues that this is the fatalistic act of the oppressed who can find freedom no other way, as Romeo and Juliet find it through each other,

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while keeping her distance, as they do from her (3.2.30-43). Defoe describes this as a common practice in rich detail in his documentary novel of the 1665 plague (60-1).

[200] This gives the impression that despite it all, that this will be only a temporary truce, as the underlying causes of their conflict remain an unresolved mystery.

[201] Of course, dramaturgically this functions to ensure that when Juliet awakes her "other lover" Paris is not there to tempt or stop her suicidal reply to Romeo. He throws his rival into the grave, creating a "detestable maw" that is a common or a mass grave for three. From the tomb Romeo looks around and sees Tybalt nearby, as many corpses are buried together.

[202] This is a tragic suicidal structure Shakespeare repeats later in *Antony and Cleopatra* (Rozett 152) but without the significant plague element. Shakespeare uses this feigned death, in tragedy, it seems to attest to the truth of the woman's love, and the comedies, like *Much Ado* or *The Winter's Tale*, which lack the suicide element, as a test-proof of a woman's virtue (154).

even if that means death for them both (38). The figuratively "infected" marriage of Romeo and Juliet ends as each confronts the death of the other.[203] Plague's inscrutability, through the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, exposes the fallibility of human governance as it creates the city's "malady" that requires their sacrificial tragedy as cure—a cure formed by the remembrance of their deaths as members of the community. Such remembrance is entirely absent from *The Alchemist*.

The conflict of humors, wet-heat of young sanguine (blood) love and the dry-heat of choleric (bile) of old hate, is resolved as the love and hate cancel each other out and the cold grave "cools" the overheated living passions of young love and old hate, in the sacrifice of the lovers for their love that might cool the fathers' hate. Within this humoral logic, the young lovers' existence is necessary to the symmetry of the play's balanced resolution, which is then carried forward in the memorials of the fathers. The young lovers' rebellion becomes the helpful poison (*pharmakon*), that the Plague-assemblage helped create, ending the fathers' resistance to good order. It is the remembrance and pledge for continued memorialization of the poison of Romeo's and Juliet's death that corrects the fractured community, thus far destabilized by noble factional hate. *Romeo and Juliet* shows the beginning of Shakespeare's working through the problem of the plague-poison as cure within a humoral model. But while the remembrance of community allows the *pharmakon* of poison to cure, there is still the missing component found in the record of Richarde Dawson: the *pharmakos*, sacrifice, for the survival of the community by a part of the community. Romeo and Juliet sacrifice for each other, they are the willing *pharmakoi* to their lovers' community, which does not survive, while the living coopt their sacrifice as a

[203] Dekker's Wonderful Yeare contains two stories that help highlight the plaguey nature of Romeo's and Juliet's death. The first, is of a young couple who are married during a Plague outbreak. The bride, though, is infected and that becomes clear after she says, "I do." The other story, that is also an attack on quarantine policy, is of a householder who wakes to find his wife dead by his side and discovers that his whole household is dead (21, 14).

poison (*pharmakon*) that can correct the city's disorders. Their deaths, further, eliminate their fathers' empire, foreclosing the futures of their families. This future was property, in the form of Juliet whom Capulet had been intent on exchanging with a member of the royal family, Paris who was Escalus' cousin. Romeo, of course, would have inherited the Montague name, title, and possessions. Without these their future, it becomes possible for the wealthy fathers to engage in community, to choose to give freely: first, to the dead, who cannot return such gift, and second to the city, knowing that they can no longer be a part of its future. Both gifts, cannot be reciprocated, and thus are potentially community-founding *munus*. Such sacrifice however, and a more thorough exploration of poison as cure, is central to the "plagues" and death of Timon.[204]

Part II: From the Abjected: "a plague consume you"

Shakespeare's mingling of the *pharmakon*-poison-cure with humoral balancing of opposites appears also in *Timon of Athens* in which the first, plagued stage of treatment is poisonous before the de-escalation to the ordinary, gentler order of balancing sword with olive branch that Alcibiades enacts.[205] A greater consideration and understanding of "plague" in the play helps to dispel the ambivalence surrounding Timon's epitaph (Jie 120) exposing the play's *pharma*-centered politics. The epitaph has been characterized as a "mocking laugh" of revenge "directed from the freedom of the grave at the misery of lives lived in a 'false world'" (Maitra 196). Clearly, Timon has reason to hate his former city. However, the conspicuous resonances of Timon's death with the early modern Plague victim—both the general victim of London and

[204] *Timon of Athens* has the second most "plague" references of all of Shakespeare's plays.
[205] The play is, loosely humoral to begin: When Timon is rejected by the community of Athens, the senators evaluate Timon in humoral terms, "He's but a mad lord, and nought but humors sways him" (3.6.111). This hints that perhaps Timon's earlier project of generosity was a humoral attempt to balance the greedy avarice of the city that fails. However, once banished Timon turns away from humoral logic and instead accepts poison and infection, and ultimately his death as the way to cure Athens ills.

Richarde Dawson—encourages a reconsideration of his relationship with Athens. Through this reconsideration, it becomes clear that Timon's epitaph is not merely hostile, but intentionally poisonous (*pharmako*-logically), aimed at correcting or curing the wickedness of the city. The argument of this section will begin with a brief overview of Timon's death, then examine his poisonous plaguing project—accounting for which disease(s) "plague" references. It then returns to the play's final scene and the significance of Timon's epitaph, in order to expose how the play's conclusion relates to the function of Plague within early modern English political thought.

The abjected Timon dies having been first denied community, in the form of aid, by Athens in his time of need, and having in turn denied Athens community as it confronted the threat of Alcibiades. In the general course of a major outbreak, the Plague produced the internal abject, one not banished, but quarantined, a poison kept within the community but also isolated from it. However, during simmering outbreaks or in the early months of an outbreak, the pest houses just outside the city were the common site of death.[206] The general hatred for the pest houses by the London population assures that even when the sick were beyond the walls, these locations were not forgotten but instead a source of anxiety and an ongoing reminder of the Plague's threat (Slack 298-99). Thus, when Timon begins issuing his plagued curses at Athens, his abjection—performed within a suburban playhouse—contains thematic and direct textual resonances, as well as geographic resonance with the suffering, death, and threat (representing

[206] Although pest houses were constructed outside of the city, they were far too small to handle outbreaks of any significance. Instead, the early months and last months of an outbreak might find the pest houses sufficient to contain the sick, but the heat of the outbreak would entirely overwhelm their capacity (Slack 214). *Timon* was written at the end of a decade long period of simmering outbreak in London, after 1603 the plague deaths were potentially within the capacity of the newly established pest houses. Instead of being quarantined, during minor flare-ups of Plague, the sick were moved into isolated hospitals. While Timon's exile is from the Plague, it is caused by another type of "plague" that Dekker describes as the "Blacke Plague" of a man with no money and unmerciful creditors, described in the 1609 *Almanac* (B4). Thus, just "plaguing" of Athens from the suburbs would have created resonance with actual Plague conditions, as Timon became a threat of the return of the plague that lead to his "exile" from the city.

the beginning of an outbreak) of those who had been sent to the suburban pest house. Timon's fall becomes the harbinger of Athens' downfall, as he encourages and facilitates all threats to the city so that all of Athens experiences a fall like his own. Similarly, those contained by the pest houses represent a threat that might not dissipate, but instead build into a general Plague against the city overwhelming the pest houses forcing the sickness back into the city, neighborhood, and community.

Dekker describes the experience of quarantine: "loude grones of raving sick men" escape the walls of quarantined houses as the "dismall confort more fall round about" the suffering. The "Bells heavily tolling in one place, and ring out in another: The dreadfulness of such an hour is in uterable" (Dekker "Wonderful" 14). In the 'cheek by jowl' world of early modern cities, the voices of the suffering were heard beyond the walls of what had become their prisons, and the policy of their containment had to be accepted by those witnessing the effect. The tolling of the bells and the constant suffering were inescapable. The houses with the Plague mark simultaneously contained and elided the disease's presence and threat. The presence of the sick becomes a *pharmakon*, "understood from the beginnings of the philosophical tradition in the double sense of medicine and poison" (Esposito, "Immunitas" 15). Their suffering and sickness were both potential poisons, but their containment, suffering, and nearness as a threat was enacted and accepted as protection of the healthy—as a *pharmakon,* a poison, which, as Esposito notes, must be kept within the body to function as a cure: "life must take inside itself a fragment of the nothingness that threatens it from outside" (8, 56). To produce the 'immunity' of the healthy, the suffering and dying were hidden within the walls of house and nevertheless relentlessly present as a symbol of safety. The sickness was visibly contained as it afflicted members of the community who, through their suffering testified both to their sickness and to the

containment of that sickness to those who were not sick. Acceptance of the suffering of the pitiful few is a fundamental prerequisite for successful quarantine policy, and in the absence of a viable medical treatment that policy was always a likely death sentence. To some degree, moral failure (however real) offers justification for the creation of the scapegoat (*pharmakon*) who deserves to be punished and banished—within the humoral political metaphor, these 'excesses,' like Falstaff, are bled out of the community. This policy placed a disproportionate burden of suffering upon the quarantined who were, of course, only actually guilty of having been infected with a disease. Not all who were infected died, but all who were infected and quarantined were left to die or get well, and Dekker, as well as many others, saw such isolation as adding to the Plague's lethality within those quarantined homes.[207] Such sentiment (rightly) dismissed *pharmakon* logics as rationales that punished the powerless, rendering them unwilling sacrifices, *pharmakoi*, in an attempt to create immunity for the healthy, and thus more powerful.[208]

As I have described, Richarde Dawson marks the willing *pharmakos* within Plague ordering: he was contained, conspicuous within a small community, his actions were noted and recorded as an ideal of acceptance of quarantine and death, and the declaration of his willing sacrifice protecting the health of the community marks him as a continuing member of that community. His death and the end of the infection's presence in Bartholomey, when the servant Rose dies, are blunt testimony of the effectiveness of the quarantine governance of Plague for the good of the surviving members of the community. While the doctor Francis Herring, at a loss, might assert that piety was the only cure for "God's wrath" (A3), the ever-critical Thomas

[207] Dekker argues that quarantine is like allowing a "mercilesse fire" to destroy whole families while neighbors "next doore … should not stire" to help "but suffer him to perish" ("Wonderful"14).
[208] Plague policy certainly starts with protection of those in political power: monarchs quarantined themselves, nobility fled to country estates and refused searchers access to their houses when infection was suspected. However, in the midst of a mass outbreak, survivors possessed a greater political force than the soon to be dead did. Of course, this is precisely the failed logic of *The Alchemist*.

Dekker knew that the only certain cure for Plague was the death of the infected ("Armorours" 5). In *Timon*, I will argue, it is Timon's plaguey death that cures the city's troubles—or rather, it is the memory of that death that offers a cure.[209] From his cave in the suburban wilderness beyond the city walls Timon launches his program to "plague" Athens.

In *Timon*, "plague" has long been read as syphilis, a disease punishment for a specific sin, as I discuss in Chapter one and two.[210] However, *Timon* is one of the few Shakespeare plays where it is highly likely that the Plague was also being referenced—and, as I describe in the previous chapter, all "plagues" were potential sources of disorder that might lead to Plague. Timon says that he "would send" the Senators of Athens "back *the* plague, / Could I but catch it for them" (5.1.137-8; emphasis added).[211] He is clearly not making a somewhat humorous sexual pun upon the Senators' potential transgressions—of which Timon would also then be guilty. The implication that Timon would contract syphilis, give it to a prostitute, who he would then send to them, is not just ridiculous logistically, it is entirely incongruous with the story of a character who has lost everything and whose despair will ultimately lead to his death by the end of the act.[212] Rather, his "plague" use must be more along the lines of Nashe's vengeful Jew, Zadok, in *The Unfortunate Traveler* (1594), who seeks to catch the bubonic plague in hopes of infecting

[209] The pharmakon-logic found in Paracelsus' assertion that poison was curative provides a partial framework for rationalizing the harsh measures of the English Plague Orders and the tragic deaths like Richarde Dawson's; further, in effect the Plague's destruction was the poison sent by God to correct/cure impiety and disorder.

[210] In 1934, A. H. Woods seems to have begun the modern tradition of viewing the "plagues" of *Timon* as the "French Pox" and Greg W. Bentley's 1991 *Shakespeare and the New Disease: The Dramatic Function of Syphilis in* Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure, *and* Timon of Athens, represents the current establishment of the terms of that view. However, accepting such a reading of "plague" misunderstands both the polysemic nature of "plague" to mean multiple types of plague at once *and* the nature of the relationship of all plagues as potential sources of the Plague. Of course, the work of art is a work of art partially because it can explicitly produce the uncanny duality of precise meaning and simultaneously sublime ambiguity.

[211] It is important to remember here, that when the definite article proceeded plague, bubonic plague was the default understanding of the meaning in early modern England (OED *c*), and later Stephen Bradwell in *Physick for the Sickness, etc.* (1536), will say that "plague" "is usually and most properly taken for that dreadfull affliction wich in *Latin* is called *Pestis*" (B)

[212] Although, he does seem to be hiring potentially syphilitic prostitutes when he gives gold to Phrynia and Timandra and directs them to Athens (4.3.150-65), this is only one part of his plaguing project.

his enemy the Pope, whom he can attack in no other way (255). However, while Timon's use of "plague" in this case seems to allude to Plague, other uses of "plague" in this play sometimes allude to syphilis, which had a clear transmission pattern, one that defied humoral theory. After all, one had sex with someone with syphilis and one contracted syphilis regardless of one's humoral state; there was little mystery to the chain of events—faults that were moral, humoral misbehavior, and in some way impious were of course *all* entirely fictional human rationales and thus certainly fairly inaccurate explanations of the Plague.[213] A bubonic-syphilis "plague" hybrid is conceptually more weaponizable than either disease might be alone: where Pox-infection is very clear, Plague-infection is inscrutable; while Pox is somewhat humorous, Plague is deadly serious. Drawing Plague into pox's pathology of the clear punishment for a specific sin, as Timon seems to do, is a weaponization of Plague that would have granted him the power of appropriating one of God's chief rods of punishment as his own.

As well, the lesser plague of pox reminds all that while syphilis is the punishment for sexual promiscuity, the Plague might erupt from the proliferation of such intemperate, impious behavior and from such lesser-plagues—much as it might follow from the proliferation of Dekker's "Black Plague" of going into debt and facing harsh creditors, which is what afflicts Timon. In Timon's first use of the word he has similarly pluralized it to "Plagues incident to men, / Your potent and infectious fevers heap / On Athens, ripe for stroke!" (3.4.21-3). These lines seem to open a many-faced plagueish program against an Athens, figuring the city as deserving of such "plagues." He wishes for a sort of "general leprosy!" of "Breath, [that] infect breath," so "[t]hat their society (as their friendship) may / Be merely poison!" (4.1.21-33) that reciprocally, as breath, is exchanged between them as they poison each other. He seeks to afflict

[213] Certainly, the inconsistencies found within examinations of victims' piety, humoral behavior, and morality could not have inspired confidence—remembering that a preponderance of victims were children.

Athenians by making Athens a place of plagues: "O blessed breeding sun, draw form the earth / Rotten humidity, below thy sister's orb / Infect the air!" (4.3.1-3).[214] Timon's program comes to include the Banditti who he sends to Athens (4.3.445-7) and the prostitutes he hopes will infect Athenians with disease:

> Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust
>
> …
>
> Plague all,
>
> That your activity may defeat and quell
>
> The source of all erection.

Timon gives the women gold, sends them off as biological weapons to curtail Athenian production of life. Similarly, by supporting the former Athenian captain, he helps to promote the plague of war from the wrongly banished Alcibiades:

> He is sending Athens own "poisons" back to it.
>
> … here's gold—go on;
>
> Be as a planetary plague when Jove
>
> Will o'er some high-vic'd city hang his poison
>
> In the sick air … Spare not the babe,
>
> Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy. (108-20)

This is a call for a war of total devastation, one that imitates the Plague's particular, "planetary" lethality among children. But also, this is an allusion that might have been understood to reference Paracelsus' astrological rooted theories of disease, and the miasmic imagery create a

[214] This miasmic allusion conforms more to Paracelsus' poisonous world, whereas with humoralism, the miasmic notions are not entirely aligned: in theory, perfectly aligned humors should create perfect immunity, as Hal seems to model in his time in East Cheap.

poisonous world that threatens the individual. The miasmic air is part of Timon's *pharmakological* project to poison the city. Timon has launched a broad scope of attacks on Athens: upon property, through the thieves; upon sex and reproduction, through the prostitutes; and upon sovereignty, through Alcibiades.

While these attacks seem, at first, to show Timon's commitment to revenge, they are ultimately revealed as *pharmokon* or poisonous corrective after Timon's death. If Timon's "plague" invocations are understood as potentially corrective, then he remains a more tragic and sympathetic figure than he may readily seem for modern audiences. Understood as committed to a corrective project, Timon is a consistently sympathetic, even heroically tragic figure throughout the play, rather than a puzzling, tragically naïve one. He corrects disloyalty by giving Athens disloyalty when they seek his help to stop the dismissed captain and instead he gives aid to Alcibiades who destroys Athenian sovereignty. He sends the thieves as poison in response to Athenian avaricious interest in possessions and sends the prostitutes to poison them through their lewdness—with a not inconsequential plaguey and explicit target of procreation and children.

For example, Timon encourages the thieves to "Go, suck the subtle blood o' th' grape / Till the high fever seethe your blood to froth"—go rob Athens and gorge yourself until you are made sick with wealth—but "Trust not the physician, / His antidotes are poison, and he slays / More than you rob" (4.3.429-30, 431-3). Timon is the physician he describes, expressing a common sentiment about doctors, as the first Bandit recognizes, intent upon poisoning, but Timon's poisoning works well enough to sway the Bandits, as they are almost infected by his seeming promotion of their mystery (451).[215] Timon's function is foreshadowed in this moment

[215] This is a pharmakon that nearly cures the bandits, as Timon's promotion of thieving is followed by a meditation on the fact that the order of the universe is thievery (435-50). He reasons as one who favors thieving, as a sort of thief himself, and his reasoning from that internal-to-thievery logic, almost motivates the thieves to abandon their trade.

as he "infects" or joins with the "sick" or disordered thieves and nearly cures them. In the beginning of the play, Timon is famously generous to a fault; the rest of Athens is, of course, tragically not. When he needs the generosity of his friends and his city they turn away from him. In the end, when the senators come to ask for his aid, his only answer is to wish that he could send them the "plague," as he refuses to help anyone, refuses to be generous, and refuses all bonds of community.

As Maus argues in *Being and Having in Shakespeare*, like the world of the *Henry IV* plays, Timon's world is also built on chattel and transient instrumental relationships (42-44; Darcy 173)—although he does not realize this until after he has lost everything. The general reading of his tragedy is that he seems entirely unaware of this until it is too late. However, Timon's vengeance project, which at first seems like Titus' Aristotelian proportional justice (Crosbie 163-70), is more than simple revenge or justice. Instead, Timon uses the "plague" as a metaphorical vector that makes this justice more Paracelsesian than humoral or Aristotelian. Rather than attempting to cure Athens by balancing it, as Romeo and Juliet's love cures their fathers' hate, Timon's response mirrors the disorders of Athens. Timon diagnoses Athenian society's flaws, chief among them that it has lost the *munus* of sacrifice and service to community and instead believes itself immune to misfortune and thus does not need help from others, as Timon does. While Timon's fortunes are first to turn, ultimately all of Athens faces misfortune. Thus, his use of "plague" draws upon the understanding of disease, and Plague's general threat in particular, as corrective (Grigsby 173).[216] As cure, Timon recreates Athenians' failure to aid him when he refuses to aid them, thus administering that 'poison' to them. His project functions within conceptual framework of plague, as he offers "Plagues incident to men"

[216] He even doubts his loyal steward, Flavius, who represents the "servants community" the only real functional community (Maitra 173).

(3.3.21) as medicine that leads to the final cure provided by Timon's own death and memorial. The memorial written to Athens reconnects him to the city.

Timon's last spoken lines of the play both close his invocation of plague correction and fully explains his project: "What is amiss, plague and infection mend! / Graves only be men's works, and death their gain! / Sun, hide thy beams, Timon hath done his reign" (5.1.221).[217] This "plague and infection" is the assemblage—capable of challenging political rule and correcting the social order—that Timon has marshaled as his corrective "reign" over Athens. His grave, like Richarde's—and Romeo's and Juliet's to some degree—is of his own making, and his death is the mark of his victory over that which killed him, as his last act preserves his membership within the community of Athens; although, this was a membership he could not have known would be granted. Thus, his death is true *munus*, the obligation given to the community, offered without expectation of reciprocation. He has answered the political-economy of Athens with a destruction that stops just short of the zero-sum politics of complete destruction. His death cathartically reveals Athens' failures, as the city is forced to beg for peace and leniency from the banished Captain now turned conqueror, Alcibiades. Timon's plaguing death, rather than producing apocalyptical destructive plague/war catastrophe for all of Athens, creates an apocalyptic revelation and correction through the "plague"-like "curse" effects of Timon's "Plague all" program (4.2.162.).

To reconsider the final act of Timon's 'program' it is useful to begin with Ken Jackson's reading of the deeper Christian sacrifice in Timon's death, which argue that rather than a descent into nihilism, the play is actually an exploration of the "passion underlying Christianity" (36).[218]

[217] This of course is an echo of John Davis calling into question the limits of sovereign reign when confronted with Plague's reign, noted in chapter two and discussed in more detail in chapter four.
[218] It is certainly correct to say that there is something Christ-like in Timon's death, as if he dies for the sins of Athens, dies so Athens does not have to suffer more under Alcibiades sword. However, what else is Jesus but a

However, it is now clear that this is not exclusively a Christian sacrifice. Timon's epitaph, which reconnects him to Athens, provides his community with the death-gift (*munus*) that is at the heart of community, according to Nancy and Esposito, for them to memorialize and celebrate, inoculating them from the lack of *munus* of which they had been guilty.[219] Timon's form of revenge and abrupt death helps to create what has been widely accepted as the "disjunctive structure of *Timon*'s last act" (Fly 243). His death creates disorienting emptiness within the play, however his death grows to eclipse the monuments to Athenian history, his absence marking the moment of his greatest political presence as his "reign" is revealed after it has ended. As the senators appeal to Alcibiades for "mercy and leniency," they cite their "monuments"— "these great tow'rs, trophies, and schools" (5.4.25)—as why they are deserving (Fly 248). But, only after Alcibiades reads the epitaph on Timon's "monument" (Darcy 172) does he grant such mercy and inaugurate a new and unique sovereignty (Baldo 577-8). Timon has given the city the monument it did not have in remembrance of what the city should not be: "a plague consume you, wicked caitiffs left! / Here lie I, Timon, who, alive, all living men did hate / Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here thy gait" (5.4.71-3). Rather than "mockery" (Maitra 177), I am arguing that what Timon offers Athens in his epitaph is an inoculation against Athens' lack of community *and* the possibility that they can learn from his lesson and forge an Athenian community under Alcibiades rule.

Timon's epitaph welcomes their brief cursing acknowledgement as curative (so that they will be unlike him), and their visit to this site of hate, his grave, as recognition of his continued

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redeeming prophylactic shielding humans for original sin? His painful, poisonous mortal sacrifice the cure for that sin. Timon, however, is something more, and that more is intertwined with his denied then redeemed membership to the community of Athens—certainly, Christian theology talks of a community, but the divine is forever separate, unequal, no man is Jesus, and though Jesus is a man he is also the son of God.

[219] As Jeremy Tambling notes "Timon's gift-giving have been endlessly argued over" (149), and to some extent my reading is another, if very different, one of those explorations that considers his death as his ultimate, and perhaps only "real" gift as he cannot know if or how it will be received.

relevance to and membership in Athenian social life. But he urges them to not remain under his community-threatening influence, reciprocating their "care" of him with a corrective care for them. While like can correct like, too much cursing or too much poison is not beneficial. After Alcibiades reads Timon's epitaph, the dominant logics of the humoral, balancing unlikes, is adopted as Alcibiades' final words return to the time-honored logic of opposites balancing opposites: "I will use the olive with my sword: / Make war breed peace, make peace stint war, make each / Prescribe to other as each other's leech" (82-4). To leech out the bad blood, the poison, Alcibiades inaugurates a temperate, balanced order instead of just applying more poison. Timon and Alcibiades, each both medicine and poison, have simultaneously spoiled Athens *and* left the city more ably led and with a continuing, but measured example in Timon of the dangerous ways of the past.[220] If they follow, perhaps at their new ruler's direction, Timon's directions and visit his memorial, they are accepting and acknowledging his willing sacrifice and accepting his gift of community and thus the opportunity to reciprocate that gift by remembering him. Timon creates for Athens an auto-immunity that, if they accept it, allows them to memorialize his sacrifice, rejecting the community-poison that he created, which they themselves embodied, and which, because of his epitaph and memorial, they no longer do. *Timon of Athens*, like *Romeo and Juliet*, ends with an overt memorialization of the dead, again closely associated with Plague. Such memorialization—or the lack in *The Alchemist*—creates the possibility—or lack of that possibility in *The Alchemist*—for the reordering of the community within each city. Shakespeare's production of memorialization creates the cathartic reordering as

[220] Timon is the banished *pharmakos*: Athens almost immediately seeks him when they are confronted by the threat of Alcibiades—it is a somewhat strange moment in the world of the play, as the Athenian Senators expect that Timon will come to their aid after they have rejected them. Athens clearly includes Timon within the community still and expects that he will welcome that continued inclusion. His unexpected rejection is, however, revealed as false at the end of the play.
Alcibiades' destruction might well have been total had it not been for the intervention of Timon, which turns Alcibiades into a helpful poison (*pharmakon*).

a political correction that ends each play, while Jonson's comedy, rather more darkly, lacks any such catharsis.[221] In Jonson's play the dead have no political power, in Shakespeare, the dead rub shoulders with sovereigns—as John Davies Plague does when it seems to threaten the reign of the sovereign. Mercutio's and Timon's use of "plague" demonstrates the metaphorical vector for political power within the Plague context in which the otherwise powerless achieve significance. This is beyond the notion of the disordered as a potential threat of outbreak, as Falstaff-Hotspur represent (and as the soldiers in Henry V's army represent, which I will discuss in the next chapter). Their importance and power is within the remembrance—or "example" as Ben Jonson describes it—of their sacrifices by the community they continue to be a part of. For the poor, who are thought of as sources of the disease, Plague offered a tragic thanatopolitics through which they might affect the misrule of the politically powerful, as Timon, Mercutio, and Romeo and Juliet all do. The memorialized poor carried a political importance as both one of the sources of and primary suffers from Plague (Healy 39).

[221] As Dorothy Nelkin and Sander L. Gilman note in their essay, "Placing Blame for Devastating Disease" in *In Time of Plagues: The History of Social Consequences of Lethal Epidemic Disease*:

> Locating blame is in effect a quest for order and certainty in an anxious and disruptive situation. … Categories of blame often reflect deep social-class biases. Illness is frequently associated with poverty and becomes a justification for social inequities. But blaming is also a way to create psychological as well as social boundaries. For the individual, blame is a way to draw a boundary between the self and the diseased, and thereby release anxiety.
>
> (40-1)

To this I would add that it also allows one to rhetorically and conceptually inoculate oneself from that threat. If the poor are the source of plague, then, as the non-poor one could believe themselves to be relatively safe from the Plague's threat.

CHAPTER FOUR
"show them my servant Death": Plague-Sovereigns' Destructive Rule

"…the bubonic plague threatened the security of each reign and of each royal linage. Like a Shakespearean Richard III, waiting for a time of prosperity to seize the crown and initiate a reign of terror, the plague haunted the English throne."
Rebeca Totaro, *Suffering in Paradise*

"When the exception becomes the rule, the machine can no longer function. … the rule, which now coincides with what it lives by, devours itself."
Giorgio Agamben, *The State of Exception*

"And hardly can we say the King doth raigne / That no where, for just fear, can abide."
John Davies. *Humours heau'n on earth with the ciuile warres of death and fortune. As also the triumph of death: or, the picture of the plague, according to the life; as it was in anno Domini. 1603*

"Imagine that death (like a Spanish Leagar, or rather like stalking Tamberlaine) hath pitcht his tents, (being nothing but a heape of winding sheets tackt together) in the sinfully—polluted Suburbes: the Plague is Muster-maister and marshall of the field…"
Thomas Dekker, *The Wonderfull Yeare*

"I—like one lost in a thorny wood,
That rents the thorns, and is rent with the thorns
….
Not knowing how to find the Open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out
Torment myself to catch the English crown."
William Shakespeare, *3 Henry VI*

SECTION I: Introduction

In the first epigraph of this chapter, Totaro clarifies John Davies' description of the confrontation between Plague and sovereign and makes a simile that did not inspire this chapter but could have: "the bubonic plague threatened the security of each reign and of each royal linage. Like a Shakespearean Richard III, waiting for a time of prosperity to seize the crown and initiate a reign of terror, the plague haunted the English throne" (2). In this passage she imagines that the Plague is like Richard; it is my aim to understand the inverse of that proposal, that

Richard's sovereignty is like the Plague. Where the last chapter examined the condition of the Plagued, the infected and quarantined subject, of which Richard Dawson is the quintessential example, this chapter examines plague-sovereigns. Plague-sovereigns are *not* the sovereign ordering of the English Plague regime, which I outlined in chapter two. Instead, plague-sovereigns are those sovereigns who mobilize a particular kind of sovereignty resembling a human manifestation of the Plague's political effect. I begin with a theoretical outline of that form of sovereignty, distinguishing it from other forms. Then I outline the characteristic of a plague outbreak that manifest themselves within plague-sovereigns' regimes. Finally, I examine two unusually transgressive, violent, and otherwise plaguey sovereigns whose regimes conform to the concept of sovereignty I have identified as plague-sovereigns: Tamburlaine and Richard III.

Part I: Productive Sovereignty, Tyranny, and Plague-Sovereignty

To define plague-sovereigns I begin by distinguishing it from sovereignty, which the well-known sixteenth century political theorist Jean Bodin defines as "the absolute and perpetual power of a commonwealth … that is, the highest power of command" (1). A sovereign is superior to their magistrates and all others who might govern within the sovereign's state. Under the classic definition, the sovereign governs the state for the good of the state and good of the people. Within this definition of sovereignty lie tensions between the three goals of (1) preserving the general good, (2) managing the will of the people, and the (3) sovereign's own interests and authority. The sovereign's power of decision has the force of law, and it is through law that they enact their will upon the state, that is, govern it.[222] As Giorgio Agamben notes,

[222] By governance I am broadly following the OED's second or "b." definition as the act of "controlling, directing, or regulating influence, control, sway, mastery." I am specifically attending to the political-act of managing the

"The paradox of sovereignty consists in the fact the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order" ("Sacer" 15). This "paradox" is that the sovereign's will flows through the state as governing law, while the sovereign is beyond the state and of course the law (Schmitt, "Theology" 7). Such sovereignty governs a state that manifests the collective that is joined together for mutual benefit, as Samuel Pufendorf describes (139). The good sovereign governs for the benefit of their subjects whose will they are, ultimately, a manifestation and director of. Thus, good sovereigns, unlike plague-sovereigns, are those who exercise power upon the subjects of their state for the best collective interest of those subjects and of the state.

Tyranny, in contrast, is defined by Aristotle in book III of *Politics*, as a single-person government "treating the citizens as a master treats slaves" (115). Machiavelli is typically considered *the* proponent of the tyrant, however, he describes a sovereign in *The Prince* who is, in fact, radically curtailed by the need to be attentive to the will of the people.[223] Machiavelli's advice for the prince is to avoid the instigation of action beyond law, both among his subjects and himself (through violence), and to restrain sovereign violence as much as possible to avoid producing resentment and resistance ("Prince" 33).[224] In *Discourses of Livy*, Machiavelli defines the tyrant as one who ignores the will of others and is even cruel to their people (47-49). In fact, tranny destroys "free civil state" and replaces it with "absolutist" subjugation under a "tyrannical" sovereign (46).[225] Seemingly in defense of sovereignty, Bodin describes what he

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state. In terms of the sovereign, governance is essentially a prescriptive political act behind which stands the force of the state and/or expectations of obedience—either through law and punishment, cultural norms, rationale choice, or some form of informal social punishment.

[223] Machiavelli's prince resembles Aristotle's basic description of the "bad tyrant" in book V of Politics as they who seek to maintain their authority above all others and rules only for their own interests (246; Boesche 1).

[224] Machiavelli's *The Prince* is essentially focused upon for the creation and management of peerless *virtù*, which he declares cannot be gained by killing citizens, betraying friends, being "treacherous, merciless and irreligious, power may be gained by action in such ways, but not glory" and it is glory that is remembered ("Prince" 31).

[225] Those who should be most "praised" are those who choose the former (the "civil state"), and those the most "disgrace, blame, danger, anxiety" are those who are "deceived by a false good and a false glory, allow[ing]

calls the “non-sovereign” Prince who is not an “absolute sovereign” but dependent upon the people for power. This more limited form of ruler, Bodin says, “properly speaking [is] not a sovereign” whose power should be independent of the will of the people (114). Bodin defines two types of tyrant: the usurper who claims sovereignty through inappropriate means, such as regicide; and the legitimate sovereign who is cruel, abusive, or disruptive of the stability of the commonwealth. Only the first form of tyranny may be rebelled against (111). However, Bodin argues, wicked tyrants may never be corrected through rebellion by the people (120), but may be corrected or overthrown through conquest by another sovereign—like “Tamerlane”, whose conquest over Bajazet he uses as an example of “punish[ment] … for tyranny” (112). The form of sovereignty that I am describing is not subjugated to the people but is instead heedless of the people’s will, demanding only their obedience, as Bodin says is required.

The plague-sovereigns, above all else, do not govern productively as a sovereign should. Indeed, they do not govern the state in any sense, for good, or even for ill, as the tyrant might. Here Bodin is instructive. He lists sixteen “prerogative[s] ... of the sovereign prince” (56) and plague-sovereigns exercises *none* of them that do not represent the declaration of the exception: he does not “give law to all in general or each in particular,” and does not “establish the principal officers of the state,” at least, not do for the purpose of governing the state. Plague-sovereigns do not concern themselves with “coining money,” regulating “weights and measures,” nor “laying taxes” except in service of their sovereignty—Bodin’s seventh, eighth, and nine prerogative (56, 64, 78-81). However, plague-sovereigns *do* declare war (Bodin’s second prerogative) and reserve the “right of judging in the last instance,” but plague-sovereigns’ judgement is generally for death over life rather than granting pardon and life—the fifth prerogative of sovereignty (67;73).

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themselves, either willingly or through ignorance” to be subjects of a tyrant (47). “Tyranny” for Machiavelli “is the denial of liberty and the rule of law” (Giorgini 239) by a ruler.

Plague-sovereigns require "fealty and liege homage" (78), but never motivate such obedience in the service of the state, but only in the service of fortifying or expanding their sovereign position. Three of the five remaining prerogatives plague-sovereigns might use to empower their sovereignty: the right of the sea, control of safe-conduct, seizure of lands, and "right of royalties," are used to add revenue or seize persons or territory (83-85). Plague-sovereigns' use of Bodin's fourteenth prerogative, the right of reprisal (85), is complicated. Essentially, Bodin argues that once it was only the sovereign who could retaliate against attacks, but then their ministers were granted this right. For plague-sovereigns, retaliation also preserves their sovereign position, and is both personal and granted to those who work in support of their sovereignty—*not* in governing the state. Finally, Bodin lists sovereigns' right to judge by their conscience, however, while plague-sovereigns judge for the preservation of their sovereignty, they might allow exemptions to this rule—as the Plague mysteriously might *not* infect one member of a household or skip one house in a neighborhood or some neighborhoods of a city. Such exemptions, like these mysterious immunities, only enhance the perception of their autonomous power beyond all law—or understanding, in the Plague's case. For plague-sovereigns, such exemptions are not circumscribed by even their own sovereignty securing, possessing, and enhancing regime.[226]

Plague-sovereigns suspend the law and do not reactivate it; their absolutist power is the quintessential monarchical power of *auctoritas* Agamben describes, with their sovereign authority, "bound to … [their] person" alone ("Exception" 79, 82). A tyrant might govern the

[226] The sovereign's relationship to civil law, according to Bodin is to make law (56-7,): "… the power of the law lies in him who has the sovereignty and who gives force to the law through the words, 'we have said and have ordained, we do say and ordain, etc.'" (55). But the sovereign is not bound by law, though they are bound by the contracts that they or the sovereign that they inherited from (14). The sovereign is of course ordained by God but not subject to any punishment except from God for whatever tyranny (120).

state, in fact, Machiavelli's Prince certainly does, as he guides and manipulates the people's will. But plague-sovereigns do not extend governance or juridical force beyond the exception. Instead their sovereignty resides permanently within the moment of exception when the sovereign sets aside law and directly exercising their power of decision over life and death through the sovereign franchise on violence.[227] Plague-sovereigns exist at what Agamben calls the "threshold (state of exception) between the two"—inside and outside of the "juridico-political order" ("Sacer" 19). Rather than producing the conditions "that make the validity of the juridical order possible", plague-sovereigns render such order meaningless and, indeed, impossible by residing entirely in the moment of exception or "zone of indifference, where inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur with each other" (Agamben, "Sacer" 19; "Exception" 23).[228] Rather than "safeguarding" the norm, plague-sovereigns remove (or attempt to remove) the norm from the political field so that politics are only of the exception and characterized by the use of death to create that sovereignty.

At the end of his analysis of the exception Agamben notes, "The only truly political action … is that which severs the nexus between violence and law" ("Exception" 88). He makes this remark in the context of formulating possible resistance through law to the violence of the state of exception, which echoes Walter Benjamin's Eighth thesis of history and to some degree his essay "Critique of Violence". For Benjamin this severing of the connection between violence and law is in service of the subject's emancipation from the violence of the existing system, to create a better system. However, this also describes the foundational political act of plague-sovereigns: the severing of law from violence so that violence is directed entirely from the

[227] The exception is the political site that is the exclusive territory of the sovereign (Schmitt 5).
[228] Agamben sees this as the only condition of sovereignty—there is nothing but the exception in his definition. This is the point of the more radical contemporary definitions, which distinguishes them from early modern or classical ones, and which pose a challenge to Schmitt's defense of sovereignty.

sovereign's will to power which is what creates the continual emergency of plague-sovereigns' perpetual exception.[229] In Agamben's exploration of the exception, he attends to the concept of *iustium* in Roman law, which in "extreme cases" empowered "all citizens, to take whatever measures they considered necessary for the salvation of the state" ("Exception" 41). The sovereign's invocation of the exception is similarly, and theoretically, a response to emergency, but plague-sovereigns foreclose the return to the original or creation of a better state, everything that is not of their sovereign regime is a threat to that regime (1-6). Plague-sovereigns purse power through any means at their disposal, disregarding—potentially—all norms (political or otherwise).[230] The norm, the state, and subjects, are entirely immaterial to plague-sovereigns' regimes, and those regimes are, therefore, fundamentally destructive negations of the common good, and potentially the long-term good of the state, which is no longer managed by the sovereign.

If the quintessential sovereign decision is over death or life, plague-sovereigns' power—beyond law—of death is out-sized compared to their capacity to grant or foster life through the pardon. Plague-sovereigns have no interest in the power of the pardon which extends, through the pardoned life into the norm of the productive state. Instead, their sovereign-power is of and for the exception, and in particular, for non-productive death rather than the affirming pardon. This is precisely what Agamben means to suggest when he notes that "Schmitt could in no way accept that the state of exception be wholly confused with the rule" ("Exception" 58). For Schmitt, trying to distinguish the ongoing state of the Nazi Reich's exception (begun in 1933)

[229] While Agamben and Benjamin are drawing attention to the violence inherent to the law because of the system of domination from which it emerges. On the surface, at least, the similarities between the formative act of an extreme form of sovereignty and the liberalizing philosophy of resistance offered by Benjamín (and Agamben) here are suggestive of the occasional violent excesses of rebellions, perhaps indicating the precarious danger of decoupling violence from the stabilizing effect of law.

[230] Agamben, on the other hand seems to be suggesting realigning violence along the will of the people rather than through law and at the will of the sovereign, thus 'defanging' sovereignty.

from the norm of the legal framework found in the Weimar Republic, such confusion threatens, ultimately, to reveal that the connection between the state and sovereign, law and violence was only regulated by the *Führer*'s will.[231] Plague-sovereigns are distinct from traditional notions of sovereignty, and even a supporter of the notion of soverignty like Schmitt rejects the exception's reification into the norm that plague-sovereigns enact. Plague-sovereigns are not normal. "When the exception becomes the rule, the machine can no longer function. … the rule, which now coincides with what it lives by, devours itself" ("Exception" 58). The primary (though not exclusive) uses of power for plague-sovereigns is to kill, produce immunity from death for themselves (at least), and thus be the peerless political power. Put another way, the only ambit of the plague-sovereign's power is to secure that sovereignty. Plague-sovereigns produce their own sovereignty but nothing else—except, possibly, resistance. Plague-sovereigns' continued exception or emergency does not foster life or mobilize the state productively—although perhaps it mobilizes it immunologically. Instead, plague-sovereigns enforce a state of emergency that generally only creates more death or at best reaches an equilibrium of plague-sovereigns' unchallenged domination with the limiting horizon of their own death.

Part II: The Characteristics of Plague-Sovereignty

Plague-sovereigns are not the sovereign during the plague who enacts orders to attempt to mediate the Plague. That sovereignty governs the state through the *Orders* and their Justices of the Peace, etc., and therefore is a productive sovereign.[232] Instead, plague-sovereigns are an

[231] Benjamin's ultimate rebuttal of Schmitt exposes the fiction behind the Reich's power, "which claims to maintain the law in its very suspension as force-of-~~law~~" (59; in Agamben's text the double strike through is an x).
[232] As I argue in Chapter One, Plague is a host of features that are not all what we would consider elements of what we understand to be the disease. Rather, plague is assemblage of features of the Plague experience. The plague-sovereign, defined here, is large the Plague (as in, as directly related to the disease as possible) but I've chosen the lower case *p*lague to draw attention to the fact that it is very much a metaphor rooted in the effects of the plague.

extension and refinement of the plague-man disorder of chapter one that marks the unique plague of sovereignty. That these two things would intertwin is hardly a surprise. The Plague constituted an open challenge to productive sovereignty beginning with the first visitation during the Justinian age, when the Eastern Roman Emperor—who was himself infected, but survived—was ultimate forced to abandon his plans to reunite East with West; Plague was at least partially to blame for this failure, weakening both his armies and the emperor himself. However, after the first few decades of the second visitation beginning in 1347 the disease very rarely threatened the aristocracy.[233]

Nevertheless, Plague weakened the state and disrupted normal rule. As John Davies reveals, where Plague created greater fear of *it* than the sovereign, and/or where the Plague's presence made the sovereign stay away in fear, then one could not say that the sovereign reigned there: "And hardly can we say the King doth raigne / That no where, for just fear, can abide" (10). This double-reading of the passage is predicated on the polysemic nature of "abide": 'dwell' (as in 'where the King fears to dwell'); and 'uphold, support, accept that reign (as in 'where people fear something more than they fear the King, then he cannot reign'). The first interpretation of Davies, of the productively disruptive power of the Plague, might be thought to offer a model for destabilizing sovereign authority. Plague fragments and destroys community, upsetting or threatening social hierarchy from the top to the bottom of society. It has no moral limits and it serves a larger purpose that is opaque to human will. Similarly, plague-sovereigns contain a supreme absolutist form of political power, and the decisions and the ability to act rest solely with plague-sovereigns as they do with the Plague itself (no one directed its points of attack, its selection of when and when not to strike, its selection of who and who not to infect,

[233] A central purpose of *The Decameron* might well have been to teach the lesson that a quick retreat and prolonged self-imposed quarantine could keep them generally safe

etc.). Plague-sovereigns centralize power disrupting community. They are dismissive of other interests, which are either made to align with (or develop as resistance against) their pursuit of power.[234]

Finally, the plague and plague-sovereigns share a similar relationship or lack of relationship to governance. By being plague-like—that is, enacting a more fearsome amoral terror than more productive forms of sovereignty, plague-sovereigns displace other sovereignties by terrorizing the subjects, the sovereign it aims to overcome, or both. This terror is the product of lack of moral limits for either plague or plague-sovereigns, and anyone may be the victim of either threat. The following definition outlines the aspects of Plague outbreak that the plague-sovereign enacts. These aspects are organized into three categories: death is the most obvious feature that the plague and plague-sovereign share—although, the plague does not just kill: it weakens, pains, terrifies, and disrupts. Death was the Plague outbreak's final, fundamental feature: the proliferation of death led directly to every other feature of the outbreak. Above all, like Plague, a core feature of plague-sovereigns' regime is death, which is the regime's central organizing mechanism and plague-sovereigns' continual production. That death, like the plague's, is in some way indiscriminate (kids, women, men, young, old, powerful, powerless) and it is potentially characterized by the complete annihilation of whole families, communities, cities, kingdoms. Thus, a third feature of plague-sovereigns' death production is that it is a totalizing death through which, like the Plague outbreak, plague-sovereigns destroys the memorialization of the individual death, rendering death both of social as well as biological. Finally, as Dekker said of plague, the only true cure or end of plague-sovereigns is their death.

[234] Plague was resisted, but that very resistance was also seen by some as aligning with the Plague-threat. Such mappings are imprecise, Plague and plague-sovereigns are anything but a well developed and clearly defined analogy, instead they are a loosely but consistently analogous.

Although obviously not a political agent, Plague clearly had a political impact, and there are five features of Plague that mark the political power of plague-sovereigns. First, theirs is an absolute power against which there is very limited mitigation possible to check either their rise or actions. As Artuad's generative reading of plague notes, the Plague regularly defied quarantines, overwhelming all sources of organization, authority, and power that might contain it (11-4). Further, quarantine was only partially effective, and it may have actually helped the Plague's 'cause' of infecting and killing hosts. Thus, second, plague-sovereigns' power defies complete understanding of its cause, course, or full effects. Both the Plague and plague-sovereigns are opaque, predictable and unforeseen, containing a sort of betrayal—the plague-victim is a potential betrayer as a source of the plague, quarantine is in some way a betrayal of community obligations, etc. The third aspect of plague's power is the potential feature of turning the actions and will of those aligned against it to its own purposes. Like the Plague, plague-sovereigns weaken and infect, turning the victim into a part of the Plague's function. Fourth, the plague-sovereign's power produces the exception that overshadows nearly all other order, as all choice and actions are limited and directed so as to center on, originate from, parallel, or uphold the actions of the plague-sovereign. Finally, plague-sovereigns' power is fundamentally and radically of them, in that it serves their will and no other.

While *y. pestis* offers no forms of governance, the early modern Plague assemblage, contained more than just the disease that we recognize today, and thus it had a limited but clear governmental effect that plague-sovereigns manifest. Initially, plague-sovereigns, like the plague, resist containment, transgresses ordering mechanisms. Second, often plague-sovereigns mark the movement of the political margins into the central concern and/or the central concern to the margins, with subjects banished, or in some way evacuated, or with a figure like Tamburlaine

rising from a Scythian shepherd to become an Emperor killing kings and emperors along the way. During an outbreak the generally ignored multitude becomes the central focus of governance, and the aristocracy and middling sorts essentially evacuate their normal positions of power as centers of concern. During plague-sovereigns' rise to power they themselves are, to some extent the marginal, or representative of a marginal position, and the political powers at the center are eliminated. Third, the existing order is displaced in favor of a far more simple, non-productive order. The plague-sovereign does not govern the state, only conquers it. In this way, plague-sovereigns are not formally a sovereign, in that they preserve or govern the state, but only in that they preserve their own sovereignty, and if they 'govern', they do so to secure, preserve, and expand that sovereignty. Most often, they are simply the person with the most power against whom none other can stand, or whom none can affect. Fourth, like the Plague, plague-sovereigns focus all interest upon one order, their own, with all concerns organized as parallel to the plague-sovereigns'. Finally, plague-sovereigns' reign is unsustainable and relatively brief.

Plague-sovereigns are essentially a tyrant, but not all features listed above are characteristics a tyrant must have. Thus, not all tyrants are plague-sovereigns, although all plague-sovereigns are tyrants. The features of Plague and the plague-sovereign are a unique set of criteria that are, unsurprisingly, key features of two of early modern English drama's most tyrannical sovereigns: Richard III and Tamburlaine. Not all of these features map completely unto each of them, but all are somewhat present in their forms of sovereignty and the core features of Plague are the core features of their sovereignty marking them as plague-sovereigns. It is worth pausing to consider how the early modern figuring of the Plague might have been influenced by the notions of these two tyrants. Therefore, the relationship between the object-concept, Plague, and the particular form of tyranny that I am arguing is the plague-sovereign,

might be, to some degree, mutually formative. Because, again, of course, there was no understanding of a y. pestis microbe, when people felt the threat of Plague, they might have thought of the popular terrors, Tamburlaine or Richard III—and as I will show in the next section, such connections are not speculative.

SECTION II: Plague-Sovereignty on Stage

The two sovereigns examined as plague-sovereigns in this chapter offer a variety of fruitful insights through their juxtaposition. Tamburlaine is the external threatening scourge from the East (as the Plague was) covering vast Middle and Near Eastern territories, while Richard III is the internal disruption, whose deadly affect is made more powerful by association, the more intimate the more potentially disastrous—as I discussed in chapter one and two, such disorders, within political metaphor of humoral theory, might render the body-politic susceptible to such a threat. Tamburlaine offers the blunt, quintessential all-powerful, frontal-attacking sovereign—even in betrayal Tamburlaine confronts his foe, Cosroe, head on (2.5.100-4), while Richard III provides the scheming, duplicitous murdering sovereign who never achieves his aim of being free of all threats. Both sovereigns kill, coerce, and betray as a means to achieve their positions, and most importantly neither sovereign makes any effort to govern their state.[235] Instead Richard III is essentially the mastermind of his murdering plot and Tamburlaine a general who is perpetually at war. Both are familiar sorts of plague-sovereigns. While perhaps Richard is so recognizable because Shakespeare made him so familiar, the Tamburlaines of history, the rulers who gained territory through conquest are many. Recognizing "plague" within this form of sovereignty, in particular through the extreme form that Marlowe creates within his Scythian

[235] Interesting to note that both of these characters were based on historical figures who were in some way deformed or disabled. Richard had scoliosis and Timur had been injured by an arrow in his hand and leg.

conqueror, exposes the precise point of failure for destructive plague-sovereignty and the terms upon which that sovereignty operates.[236]

Each of these fictional sovereigns has a resonance with the early modern Plague. Dekker identifies a blending of "Death" with "*Sicknesse*", this "pale, meagry, weake child … whom Death" must "nurse" to make strong; otherwise sickness has not the power to strike terror into the hearts of the world. "Imagine that death (like a Spanish Leager, or rather like a stalking *Tamberlaine*) hath pitcht his tents," (15) outside of the city, Dekker instructs his readers. It is this, Tamberlaine-death, that supports the sickness and allows it to be so destructive. Over a decade and a half after Marlowe's play was written, Dekker invokes him to epitomize the death power of the plague. For Dekker, and his early modern readers, the undefeatable and merciless conqueror of Marlowe's plays, and of the Middle and Near East, was the best metaphor for the Plague's "conquest" of London and England in 1603.

Richard, dehumanized as he dehumanizes others to the point of having them murdered, is described in many ways: Richard characterizes himself as "Deform'd, unfinish'd" ("Richard III" 1.1.20); Henry VI calls him a "deformed lump" (3 Henry VI 5.6.51); Lady Anne calls him "toad" and a "defus'd infection of [a] man" (1.2.78,147); Queen Margaret calls him "A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death" (4.3.48); and of course, Lord Stanly dreams he is "the boar"—that is, the emblematic quality Richard embodies (3.2.11 28, 73, 82). It is the first and the last that are the enduring images of Richard the deformed boar. But his response to Henry's son, Prince Edward, dehumanizing him as "currish"—like an ill-tempered dog—leads to a deeper more apt analogy to the kind of thing Richard might be. "By heaven, brat, I'll plague ye for that word"—it

[236] The point of failure is at the threshold between norm and exception. The terms upon which it operates are the restriction of immunity and foreclosing of community, and above all, the denial of the norm, the manufacturing of the continued emergency, which is rooted in the Plague-outbreak context.

is as if he attempts to claim a righteous power, in this moment, appropriating Plague, which was traditionally imagined as God's punishment. But Queen Margaret's response emphasizes his mortality, "'Ay, thou wast born to be a plague to men" (5.4.25-8).[237] Richard has used the "plague" to threaten and been denoted as in 'truth' "a plague". Furthering the connection of Richard to plague, in *Richard III*, he declares "A plague upon you all" (1.3.58) to Queen Elizabeth and her faction and family, and while this could have been any number of generic curses, the choice of connecting Richard to 'plague' is meaningful. He is like the Plague to the Queen's family: her husband, the King dies of natural causes (exacerbated by Richard, news of Clarence's death shocks the king), but her allies, brother, and two of her sons are killed by Richard—her youngest son, George had died several years earlier, probably of the Plague.[238] Further, Queen Margaret seems to recognize that only another plague may correct him:

> If heaven have any grievious plague in store
> Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee,
> O, let them keep it till thy sins be ripe,
> And then hurl down their indignation
> On thee, the troubler of the poor world's peace! (212-20).

A plague from heaven is the ultimate and only sure correction of man-plagues (or sovereign-plagues as he will become) like Richard. Richard certainly is a deadly "plague" and like the Plague, his most heinous crime is causing the death of children. Anne calls him a "defus'd infection of a man" (1.2.78) while he is trying to woo her. Likewise, Tamburlaine's more broad general threat is similarly indiscriminately directed from the battlefield of men into the domestic

[237] It has just occurred to me that invocations of "plague" are almost always a curse intended to align the curser with righteousness.
[238] Her first son, Marquis of Dorset,Thomas Grey, from her first marriage is the only one who survives, as he is no threat to Richard's sovereignty.

life of women and children. The two plague-sovereigns offer a contrast that is inherent within the Plague, it is both an intimate, threat to the household *and* a threat to a nation, continents, even the whole world. If Richard is a threatening infection, he is so on a personal level, while Tamburlaine represents a massively impersonal threat to the world. Together these two sovereigns outline the scope and the various contours of plague-sovereignty.

Part I: Tamburlaine the "general of the world"

The historical Timur rose to power started in 1360s in the aftermath of the Plague's second appearance in Europe (beginning in 1346). However, the disease had spread across the Middle East a decade earlier (around the time of Timur's birth or childhood).[239] Plague killed many, including among of the aristocracy, and weakened those states and their sovereign families, creating a power vacuum that Timur would fill. The historical figure's contemporaneity with Plague's appearance could not have escaped Marlowe's nor even his audience's notice. In many ways, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, born from this plague-following conqueror, is the quintessential plaguish sovereign, and explains Dekker's use of him as a metaphor for the death that accompanies Plague in his pamphlet *The Wonderful Yeare*, playing on the character's strong association with the Plague. Tamburlaine claims death as his servant, is a threat to all other sovereignty, and has a singular order with a simple binary mode: submit or die (with some exceptions), which is a decidedly Plaguey absolutism. Peerless political power is the singular feature of Tamburlaine's sovereignty, and since Tamburlaine's first conquests is through submission rather than death, I will begin with the plaguishness of Tamburlaine's power before turning to his reliance on death, and then to his relationship to governance, such as it is.

[239] There is some debate about when he was born, late 1320s seems more likely than the official and religiously political 1336.

Tamburlaine is *the* sovereign—the supreme authority above all others—he is *auctoritas*, his peerless power resides in his person; while his men and army participate and support him, Tamburlaine is the fundamental and undisputed source of his regime's success and his own power. He repeatedly declares himself a sort of god, and even when he accepts the opinions of his men when he betrays Cosroe, he does so after already proving to himself (by taking the crown form Mycetes' head) that he can do so (2.4.25-40, 2.5.75-100). Tamburlaine's question are rhetorical, perhaps meant to solidify the resolve of his troops, ensuring that they accept what he already knows. Tamburlaine has subverted Cosroe's attempt to use him, by confirming to himself that he can seize a crown for himself, and thus it is the plague-sovereign who benefits from their alliance and Cosroe who is destroyed because of it. Tamburlaine rejects the subservient reward to be Cosroe's regent in favor of peerless sovereignty. Cosroe's attempted containment the plague-sovereign fails, as Tamburlaine is unwilling to submit to any authority.

Tamburlaine's power is to some degree mysterious, a force of nature. He is described as if he is *virtù* itself, powerful, fearsome, fearless, and also mild, and brilliant, charismatic and able to inspire loyalty—although it is his men who persuade Theridamas to join and not Tamburlaine himself. Cosroe cannot see that Tamburlaine will turn on him, even though he was capable of outthinking his brother in the attempt to usurp the Persian throne. Similarly, Zenocrate and her people cannot realize that Tamburlaine's ambitions are to rule the world (1.1.126-88, 2.6.1-14;1.2.38). Mycetes' man, Meander, sees Tamburlaine's men as greedy and likely to be distracted by gold coins in the field, in a clear misunderstanding of Tamburlaine's sovereignty (2.2.60-73). Likewise, the Sultan's messenger describes an organization of fear of Tamburlaine that drives his forces onward in another misreading of this plague-sovereign (3.4.14-15). Throughout the plays Tamburlaine's sovereignty operates within the space of the sovereign

exception, reliant on the emergency of war, powered by the utter devotion of his followers, and blocking the ability of his enemies to understand the mechanisms of his success. Expanding his sovereignty and thus rewarding his supporters is Tamburlaine's *raison d'etre,* an endless capitalism-like cycle of perpetual conquest to unceasingly ambitious sovereignty. That tantalizing rehearsal is made doubly powerful as, through dramatic irony, the audience is allowed to grasp the nature of Tamburlaine's order, as his followers do, while his enemies cannot.[240]

Tamburlaine's sovereignty is ultimately limited and self-interested. It is founded upon a false community operating within his perpetual state of exception. It is a non-community because it *requires* complete obedience before giving any reward. There is no gift within the plague-sovereign's demand, no good governance given, no concern for the governed, no remembrance of sacrifice. Certainly, Tamburlaine's soldiers die in battle, but none of his core group does, while the first meaningful death he confronts is that of Zenocrate, as Tamburlaine loses his illusory control of death. That he cannot grant her, his first conquest, life, epitomizes his failing sovereignty. Part of that failure is the limitation of his "state" to that of the exception. He only mentions his soldiers once when he asks, "would not all our soldiers soon consent / If we should aim at such a dignity" as the Persian crown (Part I 2.5.78-9). After this, he never considers his soldiers directly again. Their deaths do not register in his sovereign imagination, and Zabina's exclamations to the stage (empty but for the body of her husband), "Tamburlaine! Let the soldiers be buried," (5.1.316) seems to be about *all* of the soldiers. As the forgotten, suicide-bound Zabina cries out, she is a Richarde Dawson, who has accepted death for the good of *her* community but knows that she, like the rest of the dead, will be forgotten. Indeed, the plague-

[240] See Emily Bartel's essay, "The Double Vision of the East: Imperialist Self-Construction in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* Part One" for a more nuanced discussion of how the play projects both anxiety and ambition.

sovereign denies remembrance, denies such productivity from the dead, who were the state, who are the sacrifice of the people made for Tamburlaine's governance-ignoring regime.

Tamburlaine's regime is driven by his captains, who become kings—bound to him in a relationship of service, within which the captains-kings are entirely dependent upon his approval of their preservation and expansion of his sovereign power. In Part II, Tamburlaine's "contributory" kings submit their crowns to him, make their reports, and he then grants them their crowns back, in a ritual that proclaims Tamburlaine's sovereignty as supreme, and theirs as limited and submissive (1.3.118-49). These reports are all martial in nature, descriptions of conquest and future plans. What is particularly interesting is Theridamas asserts Tamburlaine's right to the sea, a sovereign prerogative Bodin describes, but it is not for trade, only to "batter down the castles on the shore" of Natolia ("Part II" 1.3.123-5). The governance of the state by the sovereign is the acknowledgment of the people of that state. Tamburlaine expects his soldiers' obedience, and ignores their deaths, for to remember them would be to acknowledge their importance. Such remembrance is formative of the community at the heart of the state. Tamburlaine has no interest in such community, no interest in governing the state, and is only interested in securing and expanding his own sovereignty.

Tamburlaine requires submission, and that begins with Zenocrate, who at first is resistant but ultimately becomes enlisted in Tamburlaine's cause, over the objections of Agydas, to whom Tamburlaine gives the option of suicide to avoid torture (3.2.95-102). This is the normative condition of Tamburlaine's sovereign rule: submit or die. Anyone who counters Tamburlaine's will is subject to the choice of submission or death—unless, he grants them an exception, and allows them to live. This is repeated throughout the plays, and for most, death is the outcome. Not just with the cities to be conquered, but with individuals from Zenocrate and Agydas to

Bajazeth and Zabina, Olympia in part II, as well as the captured kings harnessed to Tamburlaine's chariot, and the concubines. In some cases, submission is forced, as Bajazeth is forced to act as a footstool for Tamburlaine, Zabina to act as keeper of her husband and slave of Zenocrate's waiting woman, the captured Kings to act as draft animals, or the concubines made sexual slaves of the army. These decisions to some degree set aside Tamburlaine's own rule of 'submit or die', in favor of attempts to force submission; as they become symbolic of the power of his reign, props in his display of power, all in forced service to his sovereignty. However, there is a limit to that forced submission: Agydas, Bajazeth, Zabina, and Olympia are all characters who ultimately refuse to submit and are killed. They mark the limits of Tamburlaine's supremacy, demonstrating that death is his tool, but also offers supreme resistance or freedom for the oppressed who can kill themselves despite Theridamas' desires.[241] This is not the only exception that is made, as in Part I Zenocrate's friends and family are spared, even when the seven virgins are not—this "gift" from Tamburlaine to Zenocrate is preceded by her complete submission, as are the crowns his men are given. Tamburlaine's code is supposedly absolute—he says that he himself cannot change it, as if some external force keeps him in check—but then at other times, as noted, he does set it aside. Ultimately, the power of choice is his, and even the rule that he established which governs him, does not actually govern him.

Next to Tamburlaine's fixation on peerless sovereignty, the other key feature of his power is mass death.[242] True to the historical Timur, Marlowe's Tamburlaine kills many, although his first conquests are Zenocrate and Theridamas, both willing converts. But after this,

[241] Theridamas actually kills her, but after she has convinced him to do so. Of course, her attempted suicide and killing of her child is the power of Tamburlaine making her a betrayer to herself. She does his work for him, upholding his enemy-order.

[242] Timur himself may have killed as many as 17 million people, or 5% of the world's population at the time, during his conquest—only Genghis Kahn a century earlier was almost certainly bloodier, killing 40 million or 11% of the world's population.

his method is through a clear binary which demands submission when his white tents and flags are out or deals death after the color has been changed to black.[243] Mass death is Tamburlaine's stock-in-trade, his servant—or so he says. Of course, this mass death is anonymous. While Zenocrate reacts to the destruction Tamburlaine creates, such as the tragic deaths of Bajazeth and Zabina, Tamburlaine does not. For the plague-sovereign, their deaths, the deaths he causes, are meaningless, carrying no future significance within his regime. The subjects of his power are not the product of it, his sovereignty is the product, and their complete subjection is required to secure the hegemony of that sovereignty. The mass deaths are without meaning and the new order erases the dead, at least for Tamburlaine: his last words before the play's final battle are to his caged former-foe, Bajazeth, who kills himself during the battle. While Zenocrate reacts to those deaths, they are beneath Tamburlaine's concern (5.1.291-351). Tamburaline claims to be death's master, until death's externality to human will is revealed first through the death of Zenocrate and in the end, through Tamburlaine's own death.[244] Tamburlaine's dismissal of the dead ignores their humanity, he dismisses their *bios* (social life, significance) rendering them as *zoe* (bare life) and imagines that the immunity he manufactures for himself through his politically hegemonic plague-sovereignty transcends mortal boundaries as it has transcended all other boundaries.

[243] There are exceptions made, however, when Tamburlaine willingly sets aside his own rule. But by and large, this is the ordering of his regime.

[244] In following Tamburlaine, Zenocrate follows her own ambition and allows her more civilized "value system" to be "subverted" as she becomes "subsumed" into the fulfillment of Tamburlaine's conquest of the world (Whitfield 97). She becomes the symbolic "body politic… [the] boundary and metaphoric limit" (McClintock, "Heaven," 90) of Tamburlaine's empire. Zenocrate is the first territory taken by Tamburlaine, their marriage the consummation of his domination in Part I, and her death the first territory he loses in Part II; in the scene immediately after Zenocrate's death, Bajazeth's son, Callapine, is hailed as the emperor of Turkey—exposing the significance of Tamburlaine's failure to win over the former Turkish monarch. Had Tamburlaine somehow convinced Bajazeth to join him or had he simply ensured that his son was killed, this first military challenge to his empire would have never happened. Tamburlaine has not lost a battle, but nevertheless, his empire has begun to slip from his grasp.

Zenocrate's death is easily the most pathos filled moment of part II (perhaps of both plays). At first, Tamburlaine rails against death "Proud fury, and intolerable fit, / That dares torment the body of my love, / And scourge the scourge of the immortal God!" (2-4.78-9). Essentially eulogizing her as she dies, his response to her death is to order Techelles to "wound the earth" as the first step in his campaign to bring Zenocrate back from the dead by "Letting out death and tyrannizing War" (115). Theridamas, always the voice of reason, manages to calm him down, and Tamburlaine modifies his plan to simply burning down the town they are in and having a statue built so that he may "march about it with my mourning camp, / Drooping and pining for Zenocrate" (141-2). In this moment, Tamburlaine 'buckles' under death's greater power, and also accepts that there are two deaths: biological death (*zoe*) and social death (*bios*), the first of which is absolute, while he can deny the second through memorialization. But this realization has come too late, he has spent his sovereignty on building military might through death, but not building a reservoir of political *bios* through life to sustain his sovereign body through the state after his biological death.

While the foundation of Tamburlaine's power is the willing submission of his followers to his authority, mass death functions as the fundamental expression of that power. However, despite his commitment to his own mass-death-producing code, he seems to attempt to recapture or further extend the power of submission at various points throughout the plays. For example, his last words to the caged Bajazeth are to "pray for" him; he supports Theridamas' attempt to immunize Olympia from the black law. Further, Tamburlaine sees within each house of the cities he confronts (4.2.109-10), the "treasure" of the man who might become a soldier within his regime. However, bound by his own code, he generally fails to secure that treasure and instead destroys it, rather than building a state by granting life to those "treasure[s]" of those houses.

This is an indication that Tamburlaine is aware of the value of life—and, there seems to be a hint of the character operating as an example for early modern audiences of conquest, rehearsing both the potential of such a deadly form of sovereignty as well as its pitfalls (Rigs 30; Berringer 222; Mead 96). Nevertheless, despite these moments of retraction from death, this plague-sovereign too-relentlessly adheres to his code.

Only in the final scene of part II does Tamburlaine begin to reflect upon the world he is leaving; actually, this begins in the last lines, two scenes before, when he calls his men together to come with him and celebrate—or commemorate—their victories. Before this Marlowe's Tamburlaine never engage in a consideration of the governance of his state that is not related to the moment of death-exception in conquest. When listening to the reports from his staff of "contributory kings" he or they might have discussed how they were stablishing their rule within their territories, what would be the coin of the realm, what trade agreements where they establishing, what taxes, etc. At some point in the two plays, Tamburlaine might have discussed the practices of he and his rulers to use the subjects who surrendered well, or even discussed what their state might have been. He could have granted exceptions (life) to his code, pardoning the "condemned," showing mercy, for instance to the virgins (as he almost does to the concubines of part II). When mentioning the treasure of the houses, he might have made some attempt to figure out how he could acquire that treasure. In his confrontation with other lords before battle, as with Bajazeth, he (or they) may have brought up the consequences of the battle, the cost in lives, the "treasure" of the state lost. Like Hal, in *1 Henry IV*, he could have at least offered some sign of mourning for those lost in battle as Zenocrate does, (5.1.348-51). His final words to Bajazeth of "Pray for us, Bajazeth, we are going" (5.1.213), might have also expressed some recognition of the death and battle about to come. Above all, he might have granted the

calls by his men for him to pardon his son, Calyphas, but instead he gives them an abject lesson in “arms”—that is, his martial order—killing him for not participating in that order; which his captured enemies witness and mark as what defines his rule as “barbarous damnèd tyranny” (*Part II* 4.1.91-139). In each of the moments when he might have done something productive for his state, he turns away. Instead, he lives by his relentless code except as it pleases him to set it aside.

Of course, Tamburlaine chooses which city to confront and apply his code upon. His unflagging will to power in pursuit of an ever more dominant unchallenged sovereignty selects the cities he confronts. Plague-like, this selection serves only Tamburlaine’s mysterious will, and it is absolute, Tamburlaine always succeeds. That code offers a simple binary of submission or death. As the messenger to the Sultan describes, on “The first day” Tamburlaine’s tents are “White”.

> … on his silver crest
> A snowy feather spangled white he bears,
> To signify the mildness of his mind
> That, satiate with spoil” from his last conquest, refuseth blood.
> But when Aurora mounts the second time,
> As red as scarlet is his furniture;
> Then must his kindled wrath be quenched with blood,
> Not sparing any that can manage arms.
> But if these threats move not submission,
> Black are his colors, black pavilion,
> His spear, his shield, his horse, his armor, plumes,

And jetty feathers menace death and hell,

Without respect of sex, degree, or age,

He Razeth all his foes with fire and sword. (4.1.49-63)

Tamburlaine's code lasts three days, with day one requiring peaceful submission. Day two demands blood, as his colors change from white to crimson, but submission is still possible, which will grant mercy for the innocent, but exact death for the male population and rulers. On the third day his color is black, and universal death is the only outcome. His threat carries within it a plague-like ongoing escalation that occurs as the threatened city evaluates its responses to that threat. That evaluation, presumably, began when Tamburlaine was approaching, and came to its conclusion at the end of the second day. A city must evaluate its capabilities against the threat Tamburlaine poses. Like a sort of humoral evaluation, can the city rebuff his threat, or opt for potentially destructive submission. Misjudging or failing to understand Tamburlaine's simple code results in death, as Damascus and its governor discover in act five.

The Governor and the city of Damascus hope to convince Tamburlaine to set aside the "black" and to "use … [them] like a loving conqueror" when they send the virgins to plead with him on behalf of the city (5.1.23). Tamburlaine seeing this, calls them "poor fools" for waiting too long "They know my custom … [their] submission comes too late" (65-74). They blame their "ruthless governor" who had "refused the mercy" offered, but Tamburlaine's response is only that "mine honour swears" the sacking of the city "shall be performed" (92-3, 107). He orders the virgins charged by Techelles "show my servant Death / sitting in scarlet on their"—Tamburlaine's troops—"armèd spears" (116-8). Tamburlaine at first seems to be governed by his custom, but the choice of violence against the virgins is his, and not in the codes. He chooses to make them a terror and example, and Techelles' seems to pause, as Tamburlaine repeats his

order “Away with them, I say, and show them Death” and later will confirm that his orders were obeyed when Techelles returns to the state (120, 129). This gruesome display marks some sort of disjunction in Techelles’ expectations. While it seems well within Tamburlaine’s normal order, the moment exposes that either perhaps Tamburlaine had made other exceptions *or* the fact that he had declared an exception for Zenocrate’s friends and family, engendered and expectation that he would make other exceptions. Thus, even within Tamburlaine’s regime his supposedly absolute code, was understood to be not entirely absolute. In his defense of his application of the code after Techelles leaves, establish the stakes as he sees it of this application of that code: “I will not spare these proud Egyptians / Nor change my martial observations / For all the wealth of Gihon’s golden waves, / Or for the love of Venus” (121-4). But within this statement is the acknowledgement that he could, if he chooses, spare them. He “will not” but he does not say that he *can*not. His commitment to his plague-sovereignty is implacable. His reasoning is purely in service to his sovereign destiny with complete disregard of their lives: “They have refused the offer of their lives, / And know my customs are as peremptory / As wrathful planets, death, or destiny” (126-8). He fancies himself death, and his project is entirely the pursuit of the “destiny” of his peerless sovereignty. His peremptory customs are a simile for the destiny of his sovereign power, and his resolution in the service of that sovereign destiny is absolutely merciless. Unless, that is, *he* decides to make an exemption. The manipulative pathos of sending out virgins to plead with him, would not indict that his will had triumphed but that the governor of Damascus had. The plague-sovereign cannot allow that.

Within his code, the plague-sovereign claims death as his servant. But death turns on Tamburlaine, and ends his reign, as it must with the ‘reign’ of the Plague during an outbreak: if

the host dies, if all potential hosts die, the Plague's 'reign' is done.[245] That reign is exclusively an emergency martial regime of death, predicated on a perpetuation of the moment of violent exception where the sovereign and those on his side are immunized from death or meaningless death, those who refuse to submit are exposed to mass, meaningless death.[246] This binary of meaningless death and the rewarded submission of his followers to his supremacy offer the only organizing principles of Tamburlaine's sovereignty, and as was well known, the history of Timur's empire of peerless soverignty quickly unraveled. And his simple rule of submission or death relentlessly displaces the elaborate titled, hierarchies of service that exist before his sovereignty. Bajazeth's contributory kings, bassos, and layers of hierarchy symbolized by their titles are replaced by Tamburlaine and his men who refer to each other by their names not their titles (3.3.30-101). This elimination of political hierarchy is echoed in his confrontations with other sovereignties, where always the social structure, the political world, is more elaborate than his simple structure.

At the beginning of his conquests, Tamburlaine's rule marks the rise of the margins to the center—far exaggerating the actual history of Timur—as of a poor Scythian shepherd who displaces all other sovereigns and becomes the supreme general and sovereign. He begins below the level of concern of the sovereigns of the world, and then suddenly becomes a central threat and their only concern, before overthrowing them. Finally, while Tamburlaine's reign is long enough to produce heirs, the play's effectively compress his rule into what seems to be a brief

[245] Historically, though broadly influential, Timur's empire essentially crumbled as competing warlords battled for dominance, the western empire was quickly broken into pieces by Kara Koyunly Turkmen in 1410. A favored grandson, Khalil, succeeded him after pushing aside the chosen successor. However, Khalil only ruled for four years, before surrendering to his uncle.

[246] Historical Timur did capture and enslave artists and scholars, as Howard Miller notes, to enhance his glory, to empower his sovereignty.

time, and historically, of course, Timur's was a short-lived empire, surviving barely a century as a unified empire.

Tamburlaine's plague-sovereignty offered the English both a frightening warning and a fictionalized examination of the political mechanisms that this historical figure might have used to achieve his empire. Those mechanisms contain a collaborative effort, whereas Shakespeare's examination of Richard's unambiguously failed plague-sovereignty absolutely does not. But, like Richard, Tamburlaine's plague-sovereignty is entirely fixated upon securing and expanding itself. Tamburlaine's plague-sovereignty, like the plague that had come during the historical Timur's childhood, sweeps across the vastness of fictional Near and Middle East at the same time that Europe was historically confronting the Black Death. Marlowe's play imagines Tamburlaine's sovereignty, the mechanism which propels him to his destiny, as limited to the act of conquest, the singular interest of he and his followers. They govern no state, institute no laws, they only conquer and divide up the territory.

Part II: Richard's "slaughter house" of York

Never truly a king who governs a state, Richard begins as the mastermind of a murder plot that begins with his own brother and ends with his own death. His only real interactions with the state comes when he is forced to wait for the state to ask him to take up the throne and perhaps through his participation in his brother's usurpation of Henry VI's crown—King Edward IV does govern.[247] Otherwise, Richard kills and coerces in a cycle of violence that ignores the state, and instead remains fixated upon his efforts to secure sovereignty for himself. The

[247] Edward attempts to broker peace within his kingdom and court, and is certainly a governor of the kingdom. As for Richard's support of him, however much he served himself by it, he still participated in the making of a king whose sovereignty is complete.

structure of that sovereignty is manifested in the moment when he woos Anne in the presence of her dead "husband" (1.2.137). Richard is indifferent to the evidence of his own violence, that death which created this opportunity for marrying Anne. He dismissively denies that he killed Henry VI, then when confronted with her claim to have had it confirmed by Queen Margaret, Richard claims that he was provoked (91-98). He does not mourn the loss, lament the necessity of the killing, or acknowledge the unfortunateness of the death as other Shakespeare characters do in such situations. Instead, he says that Prince Edward is better off dead and that it is better for Richard that he is, before turning to his intent to achieve Anne's "bedchamber" (105-11). Richard only sees the surfaces of the situation, Anne's opportunity to be the wife of a powerful man ended with Prince Edward's murder, but Richard offers her that opportunity back as his wife.[248] Later, when he is trying to convince Queen Elizabeth to woo her daughter for him, and after offers of being the source of peace and Queen have not moved Elizabeth, he goes beyond such obvious and surface realities with an offer of royal grandchildren (4.4.423).[249] This is really the only hint from Richard of another interest than his one sovereignty, and it is of course, a promise he may not keep—it seems likely that Richard would see his own children as threats—and a promise in service of his goal.

[248] He asks, after she has left the stage, why she accepts him, and he jokes ironically, how can she choose me "whose all not equals Edward's mo'ity? / On me, that halts and am misshapen thus? *My dukedome to a beggarly denier*, / I do mistake my person all this while!" (249-52). He implies, that it is of course not his looks, but his dukedom that has moved her, were it exchanged for a "denier" he would not have succeeded in winning her.

[249] In this one moment, Shakespeare, perhaps refusing to let his character be entirely pinned to the wall unless he pins himself there, must allow Richard an opportunity before the end of the play to recognize the necessity of life to successful sovereignty and reject that recognition. Richard's response to the dream and his threats to young George Stanley show that, of course, he does reject such recognition. Instead, this moment allows the audience to the opportunity recognize the lesson Richard himself fails to realize in this last grasping offer to move Queen Elizabeth to woo her daughter. The play about history assures that the destructive death-politics of the plague-sovereign must fail because it is antithetical to productive, life granting sovereignty, and it teaches this lesson to the audience through Richard's ultimate failure.

Securing and solidifying his sovereignty against all threats is Richard's constant overriding concern. Like Tamburlaine, Richard promises rewards to his followers, and death to his enemies, but unlike Tamburlaine, Richard does not always keep his promises and instead he kills and threatens his enemies *and* his own followers and obedient subjects—Buckingham, Anne, Hastings. The only real parallel with Tamburlaine is when the Scythian general kills his own son for failing to embody the martial spirit Tamburlaine demands, and to participate in his sovereign war regime. Tamburlaine fosters an instrumental, largely one-side transactional 'community' predicated on absolute obedience and support of the sovereign project before any reciprocated rewards. Richard is only able to marshal such a relationship with Tyrrel. Surreptitious murder and tyrannical executions are Richard's fundamental manifestation of sovereignty, and through it he manufactures most of his opportunities. The deaths caused by Richard, unlike Tamburlaine's mass deaths, are intimate, generally within the enclosed confines of the extended courtly world (palaces, the tower), places metonymical of royal authority. The murders and the victims are reported as sharing a very human connection. For Richard, these deaths are inhumanely meaningless outside of his political necessities, but for the other humans enlisted in support of his plague-sovereign program these deaths cause pangs of conscience. The murderers of Clarence are almost thwarted by their consciences (1.4.100-30), and Tyrell calls the murder a "tyrannous and bloody act" and notes that the "villains, bloody dogs" enlisted to do the actual deed of killing the young princes, "Melted with tenderness and kind compassion, Wept, like two children in their deaths' sad story" (4.3.1, 6-7). Unlike Tamburlaine, who offers a general threat, Richard offers a specific and intimate threat. Richard's effect on his followers is upon their consciences. By following and obeying him, they become their own enemies—a rather plaguey effect.

Closeness to Richard is dangerous. The anonymous masses are safe from his murderous machinations, his family and anyone with political significance very much is not. Richard is the plaguy infection festering in the House of York who kills his way through the court. In contrast to Tamburlaine, whose first act of conquest is Zenocrate, Richard's first act in securing his sovereignty within *Richard III* is to kill his brother Clarence. This is the core difference between Tamburlaine and Richard: while both are non-productive plague-sovereigns, Tamburlaine has the potential for productivity, while Shakespeare's Richard begins and ends in death; it is his singular tool for achieving power as he clearly states in the "thorny wood" soliloquy, that his brothers and their offspring must die for him to reign ("3 Henry VI" 3.2.130-33).

In between the events of *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*, Richard has manipulated the King into imprisoning Clarence so that he can kill him and blame the King ("Richard III" 1.1.35-40). His problem within his speech in *3 Henry VI* is that he cannot figure out how to get away with killing those who need to be killed, this is the "thorny wood" within which he is trapped, how to hew without being struck by thorns. I am "he [who] but dream[s] on sovereignty / Like one that stands upon a promontory / and Spies a far-off shore where he would tread, / Wishing his foot were equal with his eye" (134-6). Richard can see where he wants to go, the possession of sovereignty but he does not know how to cross the territory between where he is and his goal. This moment also marks the first early indication of his ambition, above all other achievements to be a King is the greatest: "say there is no kingdom then for Richard; / What other pleasure can the world afford?" ("3 Henry VI" 3.2.146-7). At the end of *3 Henry IV* his desire to kill Margaret and his quick killing King Henry confirms both his ambition and his indifferently-murderous nature.

The fuel for Tamburlaine's plague-sovereignty is his ability to overcome any resistance. Richard, on the other hand, is not propelled so much as sucked into the vacuum that he has created, and murder is the bloody-lubricant for his plague-sovereignty. Also, like Tamburlaine, Richard is portrayed as less powerful after he has power—*Tamburlaine Part I* is the story of conquests, but in *Part II*, while Tamburlaine continues to have success on the battlefield, his power falters with the death of Zenocrate, the refusal to participate by one of his sons, the inability of his regime to foster life in the figure of Olympia, and then Tamburlaine's own death. For both plague-sovereigns, the production of death is the key to their power, and their inability to foster life, in particular the life of the state, tends their sovereignty.

When Richard becomes king, he is immediately confronted with this problem at the heart of his usurping sovereignty: other, stronger claims to the throne. He turns to Buckingham, "Thus high, by thy advice / And thy assistance, is King Richard seated; / But shall we wear these glories for a day? / Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?" (4.2.4-6). After Buckingham's either dim-witted or evasive reply (obviously Richard is thinking of his nephews), Richard explains, "now do I play the touch, / To try if thou be current gold indeed" (8-9). He wonders here if Buckingham remains useful, and acknowledges his usefulness in the past, but in the transactional-(non)community that the plague-sovereign produces, Buckingham's value must be continually proven. However, the duke is "all ice" in reaction to Richard's "wish [that] the bastards [were] dead" (22, 18). Rather than respecting Richard's wish that he "would have it suddenly perform'd" (19) Buckingham hesitates, assuring that Richard "may do your pleasure," but not offering to do it for him. Richard's later question, that Buckingham "consent[s] that they shall die?" is therefore not asking for permission, but asking for Buckingham to perform the action (23, 21). Richard needs his subject to obey him absolutely, whether rewarded or not, and

Buckingham's request for "some little breath, some pause" (24) informs Richard all he needs to know about his follower: he is not King Richard III's all-obedient subject, and Richard turns immediately to his Page to find someone to replace Buckingham.

When Buckingham returns, requesting his previously promised reward of "th'earldom of Herford, and the moveables," Richard rebukes him (90, 118), establishing that he and Buckingham's transactional relationship is not reciprocal in that Richard does not uphold his own promises. Rather, Richard is outside of such a relationship even as he demands that Buckingham uphold it. Buckingham realizes that his refusal may carry greater consequences than just his not getting the promised "Herford" reward: "O, let me think on Hastings, and be gone / To Brecknock while my fearful head is on!" (121-2), he seeks safety far from the plague-sovereign, hoping to be forgotten. One of the interesting features of this moment is how quickly the plague-sovereign pivots from Buckingham to an inquiry for another assistant, asking his Page if he "Know'st … any whom corrupting gold / Will tempt unto a close exploit of death?" (34-5). Shakespeare's Richard does not engage with Buckingham by trying to coerce him or manipulate him. Instead, Richard immediately seeks the more perfectly obedient subject, which he finds in Tyrrel, who will kill the boys even though he finds it a "tyrannous and bloody act" that even the men (Dighton and Forrest) who he "suborn[ed] / To do this piece of ruthless butchery" struggled to complete the task (4.3.1-20). The plague-sovereign requires such obedience—a Techelles to slaughter virgins, murderers like Dighton and Forrest, enlisted by a Tyrrel to do whatever the sovereign bids. Rejecting Buckingham rather than attempting to persuade him, Richard simply seeks someone more malleable to replace him.

Richard's social circle is decidedly narrow, he seems to kill rather than forge alliances, except with women, and of course he kills Anne and Queen Elizabeth was wary of him killing

her daughter. As he notes, when he woos Anne, he has "no friends to back my suit at all" (1.2.236), and while he thanks Buckingham for helping him to the throne, Richard lacks a 'faction' of loyal supporters to sustain his rule, his sovereignty is largely a manifestation of his own will to power, rather than a collaboration with supporters who, presumably, would have their own interests, as Buckingham does. These killings show that Richard does not govern the state as a productive sovereign would, through ministers like Buckingham, or closer allies such as a brother, wife, or others. Richard's only interaction with the normal governing mechanisms of the state are when he interacts with the Lord Mayor and others to accept the crown. That is actually the moment when Richard is at the peak of his power, after this his power begins to wane. Richmond's flight and Buckingham's demonstrates that Richard's power is limited (by distance), his threat is of nearness and intimacy. Richard's limits are more than just the territorial limits of sovereignty that Richmond's flight suggests, there is an immediacy to Richard's threat, and Buckingham's retreat saves him for a time, even though as long as he remained in England he was within Richard's reach. But Richard is the other-side of the Plague threat, he is the plague-sovereign whose threat is to those within his state, while Tamburlaine threatens other states. Together, these two plague-sovereigns capture the total potential danger of plague-sovereignty.

Unlike Tamburlaine, Richard's world is extremely small, an internal space within the larger world of London, within England, neither of which seem to matter much to him. When he leaves that space that he occupies for most of the play he has the nightmare and then dies in battle. His social world is similarly small. The common folk intersect his murderous course when the Lord Mayor participates in the convincing him to take up the crown, but essentially Richard's only interacts with family and the aristocracy, many of whom he kills, of course. Finally,

Richard's view of the future seems nearly as limited as his remembrance of the past. Richard's only concession to the future beyond him, and thus of the state, is in his dangled promise of offspring to Elizabeth that such a match would bring about peace. Such children would be his effort to create the king's second body. Where Edward VI brokered peace between his subjects, Richard only offers death and temporary alliances and unfulfilled rewards. One that exists after his death. He otherwise does not consider peace, which would be an act of constituting governance of a state, as he negotiated between the various concerns of his subjects. In dealing with Buckingham, Richard shows that he is incapable of performing such negotiations—it is Buckingham that helps him manipulate those who come to give him the crown.

After achieving the crown, it is continuing death that upholds Richard's position, it is death that organizes his alliances and ends those alliances. He convinces Anne to align with him, to further secure his hold on the crown, and then kills her to make way for a wife who would provide even more security to his position. Richard's killings are controlled by an ambition that is clear to the audience, but inscrutable to the characters of the play. Richard's rigid political calculus is morally indiscriminate: women and children are his victims and he aims to kill whole families but is thwarted in *3 Henry VI* by his brother. By the end of *Richard III*, he has killed most of Queen Elizabeth's family, threatened Lord Stanley's son, and these threats offer the certainty that Richard would kill them if it furthered the security of his rule. In contrast, such destruction has left holes in the governmental fabric of the kingdom, produced disloyalty in Stanley and Buckingham, weakening the state rather than strengthening it.

However, it is not just that death is Richard's chief tool, but that this death denies the remembrance of the dead, erasing their threat, the threat that their memory might invoke through the realization of his guilt. He interrupts Anne's morning to woo her and takes the body from

her, claiming a false repentance and need to mourn the dead Prince, as if taking her mourning from her (1.2.210-8). He explains away Margaret's remembrances of those he killed or helped to kill—in part attempting to blame them or her for their deaths. When Elizabeth brings up the murder of her sons, he similarly dismisses them as if, to him, they mean nothing (1.3.116-32, 167-80; 4.4.271-83).[250] The dead, which can offer no service, have no place within the plague-sovereign's regime. Richard's plague-sovereignty project relentlessly fixates upon achieving and retaining power, brushing any other consideration aside. He tries to ignore the community building memory of the dead and denies the reciprocal relationship of duty with his subjects—subjects obey and the sovereign governs for the good of the state. Richard does not govern, and only acts for the good of his position, without regard for the death and destruction he causes.

However, the dream ghosts represent the return of the dead Richard denies. They become thorns to his conscience, but even though they have some impact upon him, they do not change his course. He willingly accepts the terms of the coming fight, either he lives or "vengeance on the head of Richard" (5.3.206). Vengeance is the performed act of a remembrance of the wrong—in these cases, murders, thus "vengeance" is the living's remembrance of the dead victims of Richard's bloody rule. If vengeance wins out, then the memory of the already dead wins, refuting Richard's practices throughout the play. Memory, or the sacrifice that the dead offer the community, and the community's free gift (*munus*) of remembrance constitutes the ultimate rejection and effective antidote to Richard's plague-sovereignty. Those who remember, as Timon hoped to teach Athens, are members of a community that transcends death and disrupts a regime that seeks to forget the dead. Richmond's victory, supported as it is by the memory of the dead, even in Richard's own conscience, denies his attempt to understand the world as all

[250] At a few points he seeks to defuse blame, as when he claims that he did not really kill Edward. But generally, Richard's attitude towards the dead is to ignore them.

surface without depth. The success of this "vengeance" through Richmond destroys Richard's plague-sovereignty by rejecting the terms that Richard had founded it upon.

The ghosts create the one moment when Richard experiences the pangs of conscience, and senses the consequences of death beyond the implications for his agenda. After those he has murdered appear and curse him while praising Richmond, Richard wakes calling for "another horse" to ride into battle (5.3.177). His nightmare is the plagueish manifestation of early modern reality, that the mass burial pits were a reminder of the disruption caused by plague, as individual deaths were hidden, but also that those pits were locations that could not be forgotten. The bodies Richard has caused to be buried, do not stay forgotten. But, his response moves from shocked remembrance to reflection upon his own conscience that cannot deny the truth of the wrongs he has committed: "What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by" (182), his murderousness makes him an anathema to even himself at first. It is as if he finally acknowledges the threat he represents, as for an instant he feels the threat he is to others—as the Plague is its own enemy (if it kills everyone it also dies). Richard goes on, passing through this moment of recognizing that he is a threat to himself, into the acceptance of the terms upon which his plague-sovereignty was begun and carried out.

> Richard loves Richard, that is, I am I
> Is there a murtherer here? No. Yes, I am.
> Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why—
> Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
> Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
> That I myself have done unto myself?
> Oh no! Alas, I rather hate myself

For hateful deeds committed by myself.

I am a villain; yet I lie, I am not. …

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues

And every tongue brings in several tale,

And every tale condemns me for a villain.

…

[I] Find in myself no pity to myself … (183-203)

This monologue is a remarkable moment when Richard struggles against his conscience and loses, and in the end realizes the play's foregone conclusion that "To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard" (206) is the proper judgement upon this murdering plague-sovereign. Richard is suddenly split in two as his conscience forces him to recognize the consequences he faces. Richard has frequently been keen to lay blame upon his victims, Prince Edward was first his brother's fault then Richard was not to blame because Edward had insulted him, Anne (and Queen Elizabeth) he declares dismissively are too easily wooed, to self-servingly acquiescent (1.2.90-99, 227-8; 4.4.431). But his nightmare denies such attempts to displace blame.

Until that dream return, they are repeatedly memorialized by the women of the play, who refuse to forget, and refuse Richard's regime—even Anne, who succumbs to his "infection," regrets it and laments her own loss. Richmond, supported by the ghosts of the dead, the memory of the dead, kills Richard, ending his plague-sovereignty. The dead refused to be forgotten in Richard's dream as the women of the play refused to forget them. The return of the dead in memory marks the failure of Richard's regime, in its unsustainable, perpetual life-denying one-sided exception. The memories denied by Richard support the man who will kill him and replace his plague-sovereignty with a more traditional productive sovereignty. After the battle ends and

Richard is killed, Richmond's immediate concern for George Stanley shows that his order (5.5.9) is a positive affirmation of life. Richmond's next question, "What men of name are slain on either side?" (12), establishes his interest in the state as those "of name … on either side" are the governors of England and their loss matters for that state. Finally, Richmond is concerned for the care of the dead, their proper memorialization "Inter their bodies as become their births," then he sets himself to general governance taking up the prerogative of pardon, "Proclaim a pardon to the soldiers fled / That in submission will return to us" (15-7). Richmond's regime, in contrast to Richard's cares for the living and remembers the dead, and the common soldiers, indicating the recognition of all as part of the state that productive soverignty governs.

Clarence's dream offers an insight to the nature of Richard's vision of the world. Through the dream, which he relates to the jail Keeper, Clarence laments the temptations of the material world that come at the expense of eternal punishment. In his dream Richard tempts Clarence from his cabin on board ship to talk of the "heavy times" of the war of the Roses: "As we pac'd along / Upon the giddy footing of the hatches, / Methought that Gloscester stumbled, and in falling / Strook me (that thought to stay him) overboard / Into the tumbling billows of the main" ("Richard III" 1.4.14-20). Clarence's subconscious sees into Richard, recognizing his threat when no one else does, in a moment of dramatic irony in which the audience understands what this dream portends but Clarence's conscious mind does not. He goes on, eliciting a foreshadowing pathos for the suffering the audience knows that he will soon endure from Richard: "O Lord, methought what pain it was to drown! / What dreadful noise of waters in my ears! The sights of ugly death within my eyes!" (21-3). The audience knows is coming, and the character's dream allows them to pity him more while also establishing that they are powerless to stop his death or the rest of the play's events, which they may know are coming.

But the insight of the dream is in the nature of Richard and plague-sovereignty, which is predicated upon the failure to see beyond the surface of sovereignty. Plague-sovereigns fail to recognize the significance of the state, fixating instead upon the sovereign power to kill but not the power to pardon and grant life. Clarence goes on, making clear his ability to see beneath the surface and into the cost of death.

> Methoughts I saw a thousand fearful wwracks'
> A thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon
> Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl
> Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
> All scatt'red in the bottom of the sea
> Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in holes
> Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept
> (As 'twere in scorn of eyes' reflecting gems,
> That woo'd the slimy bottom of the deap,
> And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatt'red by … (24-33)

The Keeper is incredulous that he might have had such "leisure in the time of death" to notice this all (25). Clarence unperturbed, replies that he "thought" he did, and the "endless flood" prolonged his life until finally he faced the worse suffering of the "after life" where he confronted the dead who judge him deserving of torment (36-71). Clarence's dream creates a vision of the submerged world that parallels the reckoning he believes that he faces in the afterlife. The "slimy bottom" is sprinkled in the bones of the dead and the treasures lost. The imagery mingles the bones and treasures together as wasted riches on the ocean's "slimy bottom" forever out of man's reach. These riches are those earthly positions, which, like the flesh, are left

behind in the afterlife. However, contextualized within political slaughter house of *Richard III*, and seen through the inherent comparison of the brothers Richard and Clarence, a second allegorical understanding of the dream offers an even more pointed critique of Richard's failed vision. By placing some of those lost treasures into the now empty skulls and eyes of the dead to signify the thoughts those dead might have had that are the treasures lost, the comingling of treasure with the human remains, powerfully connects the two "remains" of the life of the flesh. This connection, gives each value, marks each as a loss that, in Clarence's dream, is hidden below the surface on the sea bottom. From Clarence's dream comes a pacifist, anti-death, life-affirming argument that death producing war, like the War of the Roses, is a waste of the treasure of humanity. Richard, of course, cannot see this treasure, cannot look beneath the surface to see this wasted wealth beneath ocean and understand the cost of death—contratingly Tamburlaine could at least see that the men he aimed to conquer as treasures that might serve his army. Richard only sees the human disappear from view beneath the "surface" as he ignores the ripples they leave, not recognizing the possible treasures that they take with them.

Richard's failure of vision explains his disregard for the consequences of the deaths he causes, as he brings his plague-sovereignty about through an opacity that matches his own vision of the world. Like Clarence, other characters cannot see into his motivations, do not see his threat until too late.[251] This allows Richard to use other characters for his own purposes, as he does with Anne, who says that she wished she could know his true intentions (1.2.192). Similarly, Buckingham does not recognize that the promises made are only good if he continues to be of use to Richard, and once both characters cease to be of use or are more useful dead, Richard's deadly invocation of the exception is revealed. Richard's motivations are withheld

[251] This creates the play's constant dramatic irony, because the audience always knows—as they knew the history—that Richard was deposed by the Tudors.

from everyone but the knowing audience, and his actions serve no other master except himself after he kills Clarence, before this he is—perhaps incidentally—a sort of plague in the service of his brother. However, his brother cannot contain Richard, who first slips his "leash" in *3 Henry VI* when he rushes off to kill Henry—like Tamburlaine, his killing of a king establishes the possibility of his success, even though he does not kill his brother Edward IV.

Once in power, after Edward's natural death, all organizations, authority, and power begin to align with Richard's will, those who do not align are killed or certainly will be killed eventually as Buckingham eventually is—or escape Richard's reach as Richmond does. Tamburlaine similarly purifies and focuses his sovereign order—eliminating Agydas and ignoring Zenocrate's (and Theridamas's) objections to his will. Richard woos Anne, coerces Stanley's to his will using his loyalty and threats to his son, and he corrupts Tyrrel who corrupts the men he hires to murder the boys. Interests that are counter to the plague-sovereigns are destroyed. Buckingham's death was the result of his expression of his own interest which was out of Richard's "vein" and concern with his own self-interest. Buckingham is captured and killed for joining with Richmond (4.4 535-31, 5.1), but as he says when he leaves, Richard would have probably killed him if he had not fled. Historically, and in the play, Buckingham does not support Richard's fight against Richmond, but Shakespeare has the character of Buckingham turn against Richard when he's asked to perform the singularly heinous act of killing the two princes in the tower. The effect is not only to redeem Buckingham, to a degree, but to point to the exact act, killing children, that marks Richard's regime as beyond the pale. This is the moment in which Richard's fall has begun. But it also marks him as a threat to children, like the plague was.

Like the Plague, plague-sovereignty is an emergency that arises unexpectedly, building up unseen to threaten the emerging political order; Edward IV's regime is a fragile one, and the period leading up the play is politically disjoined, however, there is the potential for an orderly succession and stability. The plague-sovereign's project is a building threat that precedes their possession of sovereignty. Richard's project begins with his "thorny wood" speech, but by the end of *3 Henry IV* he begins to enact it, cutting of the Plantagenets by participating in the almost ritualized killing of Prince Edward, in which Richard strikes the blow "to end" the Prince's "agony" as he lay sprawled out after King Edward's first stab—Clarence's third stab is a decidedly weak after thought, "And there's for twitting me with perjury" ("3 Henry IV" 5.5.38-9). This serves the King, and it also serves Richard's own pursuit of sovereignty. In the moment after this killing, the difference between King Edward and Richard is revealed. When Margaret asks for death as she sees her son killed, Richard is ready to oblige her, but Edward stops him, "Hold, Richard, hold"—saying the command twice to indicate that Richard hesitates to obey—"for we have done too much" (43). Edward has *some* recognition of a world beyond the surface that designates Margaret as the enemy, his act of stopping Richard is potentially a recognition of the need to pardon *as well as* the need to kill. Richard, not understanding this at all, asks "Why should she live, to fill the world with words?" (44); words, for Richard seem to have little value, it is deeds that he understands, but disparaging words should be cut off—as Richard cuts of King Henry's words later in the scene. Margaret swoons, staving off the King's explanation, and Richard, rather than taking a chance that Edward would stop him, excuses himself through Clarence and rushes off to kill Henry VI. This 'service' to his brother, is strikingly self-directed, and it becomes clear during his confrontation with Henry that Richard's motivations are not

Edward's but his own, and rather than getting permission he is willing to ask for forgiveness as long as one more obstacle is removed from his path to sovereignty.

Ultimately, Richard fails to achieve the absolute peerless power of Tamburlaine. Richmond returns and Richard's state-destroying plague-sovereignty loses support of those around him. Both Richard and Tamburlaine rely on destruction and utilize the exception almost exclusively to kill without pardoning and granting life. The fundamental difference between them is that, where Tamburlaine is able to grant life occasionally (and of course have children with Zenocrate) and create functional relationships (for creating and securing his sovereign power), Richard is entirely incapable of fostering life and barely able to create such relationships. In this way Richard is more of a plague-sovereign than Marlowe's Tamburlaine who grants life, accepts submission from Zenocrate and Theridamas (and his men), returns these submissions with rewards, grants life to Zenocrate's friends and family, to Olympia, and produces life with Zenocrate in his children. Richard, on the other hand, only turns towards the production of life in his final attempt to persuade Elizabeth to woo his daughter for him. Where Tamburlaine upholds his promises, thus at least matching his promise of death, Richard's only true promise is for death, as Elizabeth notes in her replies to him:

K. Rich. Say I will love her everlastingly.

Q. Eliz. But how long shall that title "ever" last?

K. Rich. Sweetly in force unto her fair live's end.

Q. Eliz. But how long fairlyu shall her sweet life last?

K. Rich. As long as heaven and nature lengthens it.

Q. Eliz. As long as hell and Richard likes of it. (4.4.349-53)

In contrast, Tamburlaine's word is never doubted. His code is well recognized, and while, as I have said, there is an opacity to Tamburlaine's regime (those outside of it misrecognize its terms of organization, misunderstand Tamburlaine's intentions), there is *nothing* ambiguous about his offer of submissive-life versus total death. Richard's regime has no such code, grants no life, and struggles to maintain collaborative relationships, for him these things are meaningless beside securing his sovereign position. Yet these absences are precisely what renders his position so untenable. A sovereignty that kills without granting life, without upholding promises that they make has nothing of significance to offer subjects in exchange for obedience except coercive and state corroding threats. Richard's plague-sovereignty is only focused upon the emergency of securing for himself absolute immunity of the last possible sovereign standing: his promise to Elizabeth of grandchildren is among the last desperate arguments for moving her, and as has become clear with Richard, such promises mean nothing.

In his attempt to convince Queen Elizbeth he tells her to offer her daughter sovereignty over him: "Say I, her sovereign, am her subject low" (355). But She replies, "But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty" (356) as Richard makes. He is offering young Elizabeth a part in his sovereign regime, and her mother asserts that she "loathes" that regime. Elizabeth, is perhaps on the one hand pushing Richard to offer some further security, perhaps she is trying to teach him what sovereignty is for. But, she is also making a judgement about the death-centered, "slaughter house" (4.1.43) form of sovereignty he has enacted. Richard dangles the carrot of power (for both mother and daughter) before Elizabeth, however, she rejects his promises of their position and his attempts to suggest that this alliance will bring peace. She does so on the grounds that his consistent production of death has become the only certain thing about him. Richard's destructive nature that broaches no interest not aligned with his own, relies on death to

create opportunity and eliminate impediments produces the "slaughter house" of the ongoing disaster of his court. It is this disaster that Elizabeth rejects, as we must. In Richard, Shakespeare marks the limits of tyranny, producing a plague-sovereignty that leaves behind only graves.

SECTION III: Coda

In the early modern imaginary, Plague could not have been *y. pestis*. Instead, the assemblage of the disease was understood figuratively, and this lent itself to a decidedly non-scientific existence as a concept that could morph to forge and express prejudices in ways far beyond even how diseases in this scientific age do—as Susan Sontag as famously argued, the figurative meanings that get attached to diseases can do great harm. But in the early modern era, when there was no object at the center of a disease, no consistent hegemonic theory of the disease, all that remained was metaphor. That plague metaphor, like the effect of the disease's genes on our genome, attaches itself to other concepts—some are seen to be clearly related, like the grave diggers in Dekker's *Wonderfull Yeare* who are part of the Plague's host, but others, drunken knights as plague-like, are much less obvious from our perspective. Sovereignty is one such connection. To understand how that connection is made one must recognize they effect that plague had on the early modern English sovereign order. The peerless *virtù* of the sovereign was cast into the shadow of the Plague's threat, which drives the sovereign to retreat from the threat of their Plagued capital. If plague *were* a human Tamburlaine, it would be king of all the world. However, as I have shown, plague's attachment to sovereignty is unsustainable because the mechanisms by which Plague achieves its affect on the human political world, while potentially a model for conquering practices, are also, as I discuss in my reading of Nashe in chapter one and show in this chapter, a warning of the failings of such emulation.

Throughout this project I have argued that the Plague represents a singular event with a plurality of figurative tendrils ranging throughout early modern English culture. It is my contention that, as such, it had a profound influence upon English political culture, and that this recurring event shaped English political theories and practices toward forms that we now recognize as the precursors of our modern ones (Foucault, "Discipline," 197-9; "Security," 67; Esposito, "Immunitas," 124). First, by challenging the existing order, the Plague pushed early modern governors to develop new methods of control, more robust mechanisms of government and new techniques of governing, such as the English innovation of death roles. Further, as a force beyond their control, the Plague modeled a new sort of political power that early modern political leaders attempted to emulate: a power that was merciless and unfettered, all-threatening, pervasive, and penetrating, a power that produced disorder, suffering, and death despite all efforts to restrain it. At the same time, fortified by fatalism, subjects not only became inured to coercion and authority, but found within the plague-time the opportunity to resist traditional authority. In the absence of such authority (as "governors" fled), the subject found remarkable freedom to act, and ways to make use of the plague to respond to, capitalize on, and perhaps correct injustice. When the disease raged during epidemic outbreaks, the Plague can be said to have conquered, as rulers fled before it, leading to Davies's claim that it is hard to "say the king doth raign" when the plague rages (333). The normal economic, social, and political systems were in some measure destabilized or even overturned during a visitation. Time and time again this "conquest" mysteriously appeared as a threatening siege that became the terrifying reality of summers of quarantined houses, mass burial pits, and either harsh rule or absent rulers, before fading away as the air cooled. The second part of my argument is that this "conqueror" became

one of the models that England sought to understand and to mimic as it began to imagine its future Imperial state.

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