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### *Horsemanship in Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy*

THROUGHOUT Shakespeare's second tetralogy—*Richard II*, *Henry IV Parts One and Two*, and *Henry V*—literal and figurative references to horsemanship serve to connect the failure of self-rule in such figures as Richard II, Hotspur, Falstaff, and the Dolphin with their exclusion from political rule. The same references connect Henry IV's and Henry V's self-mastery with their political mastery of England. Harry Levin, building on the work of W. J. Lawrence, has shown that equestrian references occur so frequently in these plays because an Elizabethan convention banned from the stage the actual horses intrinsic to the wars and the aristocratic life of the period.<sup>1</sup> My contention is that Shakespeare characteristically converts this restriction into an advantage, patterning his equestrian references according to conventional Renaissance metaphors for psychological and political control, and thereby underscoring his tetralogy's concerns about these two sorts of control and the relationship between them. Specifically, Shakespeare conflates Plato's metaphorical link between chariot-driving and

1. William J. Lawrence, *Pre-Restoration Stage Studies* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), describes this as a persistently awkward prohibition but one necessitated by the smallness of the stage, the noise the hooves made on it, and the natural skittishness of horses which the limited space and loud noises made all the more risky. Lawrence finds one exception, in Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar*; another apparent exception occurs in the anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*. Harry Levin, "Falstaff Uncolled," *Modern Language Notes*, 61 (1946), 305-10; rpt. in his *Shakespeare and the Revolution of the Times* (New York, 1976), pp. 121-30, sees Shakespeare playing ironically with this prohibition in the Henry IV plays; Levin does not raise the question of whether Shakespeare is exploiting it symbolically as well. Other significant treatments of this topic are scarce. Hugh MacLean, "Time and Horsemanship in Shakespeare's Histories," *Univ. of Toronto Quarterly*, 35 (1965-66), 229-45, intends only "to show that Shakespeare's recurrent references to the horsemanship of various characters in the history plays throw light on their uses of time, or attitudes toward it," and specifically declines to explore whether "time and horses constitute an image-cluster in the plays of Shakespeare." Paul Fatout, "Roan Barbary," *Shakespeare Assoc. Bulletin*, 15 (1940), 67-74, limits himself to discussing the characteristics the Elizabethans attributed to horses of various breeds, colors, and markings.

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the restraint of unruly passions, with the metaphorical link between horsemanship and rightful political authority evident in Renaissance equestrian statuary. In each of the four plays, a character's overindulgence in his own predominant appetites results in his expulsion from a place of royal power, through the mediating metaphor of an actual unhorsing. The character's inability to control himself literally causes and symbolically necessitates this unhorsing, and the unhorsing literally causes and symbolically necessitates his inability to rule England. Thus, Henry Bolingbroke's masterful usurpation of Richard II's roan Barbary results on the one hand from Henry's superior qualities of self-regulation and symbolizes on the other hand his usurpation of the throne itself, which such self-regulation made possible. Similarly, Hal's double "uncolting" of Falstaff both represents his judgment on Falstaff's failure to regulate his appetites and foreshadows his consequent determination to exclude Falstaff from the seat of political authority.

The metaphor linking control of horses with control of one's own unruly appetites may date back as far as the centaur myth, which implies the efforts of human reason to control the appetitive beast that propels it. Euripides' *Hippolytus* has a name (meaning "unrestrained horse") and a fate (destruction by an unruly team of horses) that seem to be symbolically connected with his role as an archetypal victim of unbridled and unhealthy passions.<sup>2</sup> The earliest recorded explication of this metaphor, and the most famous, occurs in Plato's *Phaedrus*, which portrays the human soul as a chariot driven by reason and pulled by two horses, one noble and one ignoble. (This tripartite division of the soul corresponds to its division into Reason, Honor, and Appetite in Book Four of *The Republic*.) The art of virtue is the art of driving this chariot, the art of repressing the base animal impulses of the lesser horse and tempering the occasional excesses of the finer one. This metaphor resurfaces in the works of Philo Judaeus in the first century A.D., equating the rider with the mind and the horse with the passions; versions of this analogy appear in the works of Plutarch, Augustine, Prudentius, Chaucer, Luther, and others.<sup>3</sup> Since Shakespeare's time, the Platonic metaphor has been

2. See A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Headlong Horses, Headless Horsemen: An Essay on the Chivalric Epics of Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto," in *Italian Literature: Roots and Branches*, eds. Giuse Rimanelli and Kenneth John Atchity (New Haven, Conn., 1976), p. 305n.

3. Beryl Rowland, "The Horse and Rider Figure," *Univ. of Toronto Quarterly*, 35 (1965-1966), 246-59, cites Philo Judaeus' commentary on Exodus 15.1 and provides the following references in its first note:

implied and ironically twisted in Swift's story of the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms, and clearly echoed in Freud's description of the ego-rider's struggle to control the pace and direction of the id-horse.<sup>4</sup>

The Platonic metaphor was certainly alive in the minds of English Renaissance authors. Sidney has his Astrophil acknowledge "That Plato I read for nought, but if he tame / Such coltish gyres" as Astrophil's unbridled passion for Stella. In a later sonnet Sidney expands the metaphorical system, as Shakespeare does in his tetralogy, to imply that when we let passions dominate us, they become the horsemen and we the horses. The sonnet begins by observing that "I on my horse, and love on me doth try / Our horsemanships, while by strange work I prove / A horseman to my horse, a horse to love"; the rest of the poem explores the similarities between the experiences of the lover and of the ridden horse.<sup>5</sup> Spenser condemns his Malecasta for "Giving the bridle to her wanton

Plato, *Phaedrus*, ed. W. H. Thompson (London, 1868), 247, 248, 253-6; St James, iii, 2-3; Plutarch, *Opera*, ed. J. G. Hutten (Tübingen, 1796), X, 219; St. Augustine, "De moribus ecclesiae," *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, XXXII (Paris, 1841), col. 1313; M. O. Bardenhewer, *Hermes Trismegisti de castigatione animae libellum* (Bonn, 1873), 105.

The passage from Augustine tentatively compares man to a centaur or an equestrian figure, with the soul riding the body. The Plutarch passage, from "*De sera numinis vindicta*," describes the human soul as a horse needing prompt correction from supernatural riders when it strays. North's translation of Plutarch, which Shakespeare certainly read, attributes Antony's defeat to "the unreined horse of concupiscence"—an early and suggestive example of the equestrian metaphor linking a lack of self-control with a loss of political power. In *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, trans. and ed. E. Gordon Rupp (London, 1969), p. 140, Luther compares the human will to "a beast of burden" whom either God or Satan may choose to ride; quoted by Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago, 1980), p. 278n. For the examples in Prudentius and Chaucer, see note 5 below.

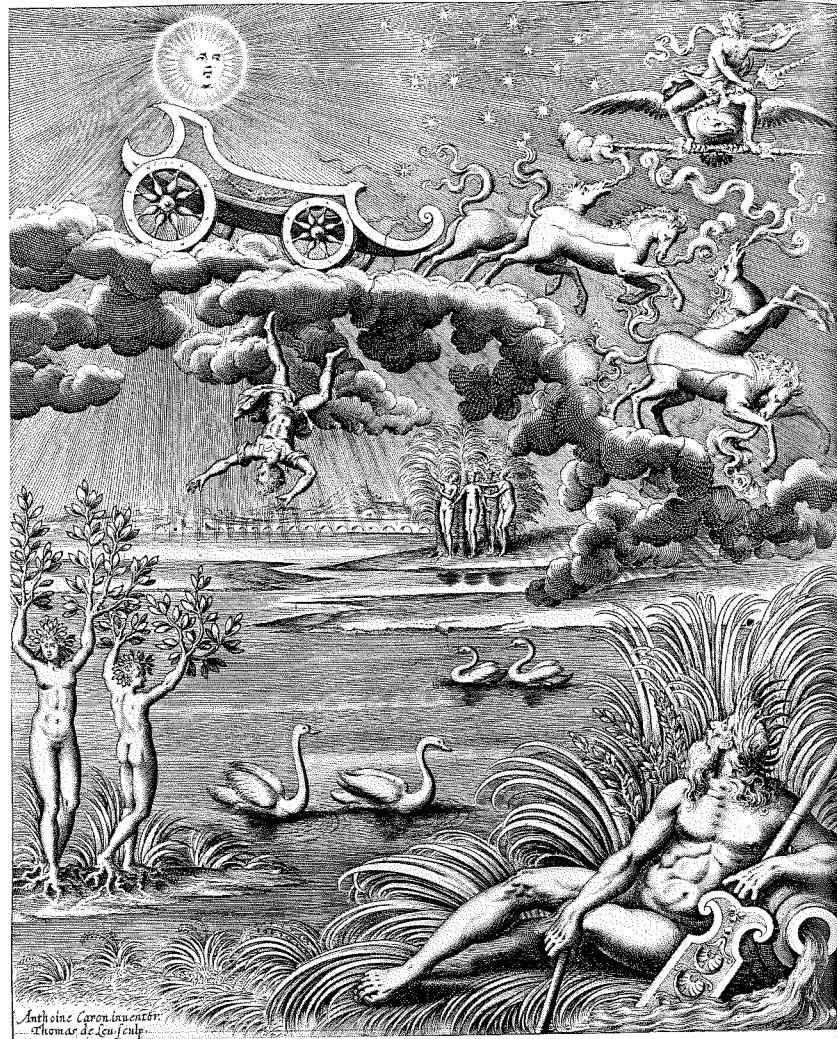
4. Sigmund Freud, "The Anatomy of the Mental Personality," in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. W. J. H. Sprott (New York, 1933), p. 108: "One might compare the relation of the ego to the id with that between a rider and his horse. The horse provides the locomotive energy, and the rider has the prerogative of determining the goal and of guiding the movements of his powerful mount towards it. But all too often in the relations between the ego and the id we find a picture of the less ideal situation in which the rider is obliged to guide his horse in the direction in which it itself wants to go." Cf. *All's Well* 1.3.27-30.

5. Astrophil and Stella, #21 and #49 in William Ringler, *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney* (Oxford, 1962); cf. #41. In James Joyce's *Ulysses* (New York, 1961), p. 432, Stephen Dedalus remarks that Shakespeare, Socrates, and Aristotle were all bullied by women, all "bitted, bridled and mounted by a light of love." Rowland, pp. 252-57, explicates the workings of this metaphor in Chaucer. In the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, those who are mastered in love are repeatedly described as ridden, whipped, or bridled. In *Troilus and Criseyde*, Troilus identifies himself with a horse when his passion begins to rule him (I, 218-24), and horsemanship remains an index to the moral continence of various characters—Theseus, Aeneas, Criseyde, Phaethon—through the rest of the poem. In Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, "Superbia and Luxuria are mounted on headstrong steeds and are violently overthrown" (Rowland, p. 247). Giamatti observes that Ariosto's Orlando is capable of



Ben Jonson compares King James I to Neptune, "chief in the art of riding." From Flavius Philostratus, *Les Images*, trans. B. de Vigenere (1629).





Shakespeare compares usurpers and bad kings to Phaethon in the second tetralogy. From Flavius Philostratus, *Les Images*, trans. B. de Vignere (1629).

will," and his Sansjoy apologizes when his rage makes him "forget the rains to hold / Of reasons rule." A man in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is damned for having "laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts."<sup>6</sup> In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* Robert Burton urges that the sufferer, "Though he have hitherto run in a full career . . . following his passions, giving reins to his appetite, let him now stop on a sudden, curb himself in."<sup>7</sup> George Herbert's "The Church-porch" (l. 32) warns that a drunkard "hath lost the reins" and therefore may commit the worst crimes of passion. These authors may well have been playing on the dual meaning of the word "reins" in Renaissance England, signifying on the one hand the reins used to curb a horse and on the other hand the seat of the body's affections, then widely supposed to be located in kidneys or loins, which were sometimes called the reins, or reynes.

Shakespeare's use of this "reining" metaphor is frequent and suggestive. Tarquin finds that nothing "Can curb his heat, or rein his rash desire" for Lucrece (*Rape of the Lucrece*, l. 706); Angelo similarly elects to "give my sensual race the rein" in his pursuit of Isabella (*Measure for Measure*, 2.4.160; cf. *Othello*, 1.3.331).<sup>8</sup> Shakespeare applies the metaphor to the irascible appetite as well as the concupiscent one. Norfolk warns Buckingham in *Henry VIII* that "Anger is like / A full hot horse" (1.1.132-33), and the angry Coriolanus "cannot / Be rein'd again to temperance" (3.3.27-28; cf. 2.1.30).

The metaphor was even literalized into an equestrian precept. Michael Baret's Jacobean riding manual might aptly have been entitled "Zen and the Art of Horsemanship," since it specifies "Anger and Love"

detaching the bridle of his enemy Mandricardo's horse, thereby defeating Mandricardo in chivalric combat, because of Orlando's superior self-possession. The horse's resulting mad flight and Mandricardo's resulting mad rage reflect and reinforce each other, suggesting an identification between the unruly man and his horse (p. 298). Similarly, when Angelica is carried away by fright, she lets her horse find its own path unreined, implying a connection between the two creatures' losses of control (p. 296). Spenser adopts this incident with its symbolism intact: his fleeing Florimell, in her panic, allows her horse to steal "The maistring raines out of her weary wrest" (*The Faerie Queene*, III.vii.2).

6. *The Faerie Queene*, III.i.50, l.iv.41; *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. Roger Sharrock (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1965), p. 66. Alexis, in John Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*, speaks similarly of "giving rein" to lust (1.3.161).

7. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Second partition, Sect. II, Mem. VI, Subs. I.

8. All references to Shakespeare are based on the Riverside edition, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al. (Boston, 1974). The only exceptions are the spelling "Bolingbroke" in preference to the Riverside "Bullingbrook," and Joseph Ritson's emendation "rein'd" in preference to "rag'd" at 2.1.70 of *Richard II*, an emendation accepted by Samuel W. Singer in his 1856 edition of Shakespeare.

as "the two duties a Horseman should observe to moderate both in himself and his Horse" and argues that the rider's "duty is chiefly to learne how to governe himselfe, and his office is to learne how to governe his horse." The two are intimately related: "let them not thinke ever to learne to governe a Horse well and truely, that cannot tell how to governe themselves."<sup>9</sup> So good horsemanship as a metaphor for self-control, and bad horsemanship as a result of insufficient self-control, were both recognized by English Renaissance authors.

By the time Shakespeare began writing his second tetralogy, these associations had evidently been extended and transmuted into the conception of the king as a sort of horseman who must restrain and guide an otherwise unruly state, composed largely of beastly rabble and their crude appetites. "The Emperor," Dante writes in the *Convivio*, "is the rider of the human will. And how that horse goes without the rider over the field is most obvious, and especially in miserable Italy, that is left without means for its governance." As A. Bartlett Giamatti points out, Dante here conflates the collapse of political authority with the collapse of individual discipline, creating a powerful, encompassing equestrian image of chaos.<sup>10</sup> In Shakespeare's time and country, King James resorts to the same figuration, warning against a state "where all things are lawfull to all men; the Common-wealth at that time resembling an undaunted young horse that hath casten his rider."<sup>11</sup> In his treatise on kingship, the *Basilikon Doron*, James associates a ruler's political effectiveness with his capacity for self-rule, in much the same way that Baret associates a rider's effectiveness with his capacity for self-rule, declaring that "Hee can not bee thought worthie to rule & command others, that cannot rule and dantone his owne proper affections & unreasonable appetites."<sup>12</sup> Ben Jonson casts King James in the role of Neptune in the masque "Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion" and echoes the conventional praise of Neptune as "chief in the art of riding." As Stephen Orgel suggests, this characterization may be intended as a flattering analogy between Neptune's conventional role as the horseman who

9. Michael Baret, *An hipponomie, or The Vineyard of Horsemanship* (1618), pp. 33, 26, 28-29. See similarly Gervase Markham, *Cavelarice, or The English Horseman* (1607), Bk. 3, Ch. 13, p. 58. Cf. John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, 1.1.136-42.

10. Giamatti, p. 268. Cf. the *Purgatorio*, Canto VI, ll. 88-102.

11. King James I, "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies: or the Reciproock and mutuall duetie betwix a free king, and His Naturall Subjects," in *The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, Mass., 1918), p. 66.

12. *The Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. James Craigie, Scottish Text Soc., Series 3, No. 16.

guides and controls the chaotic energies of the ocean, and James' role as the horseman who guides and controls his country's unruly passions.<sup>13</sup> The metaphor of the bridle for political authority appears in the works of such prominent Elizabethan theorists as Sir Thomas Smith and Richard Hooker, and even in a gloss in the Geneva Bible.<sup>14</sup> The very practice of royal triumphs and progresses involves an assertion of domain by equestrian symbolism.

Renaissance equestrian statuary (*Reiterstandbild*) provides the clearest and most persistent expression of the idea of the king as rider of his state, as much by its selectivity of subjects as by the character of the sculptures themselves. "Free-standing equestrian statues out of doors . . . were the privilege of sovereigns."<sup>15</sup> During the Italian Renaissance such statuary, taking its cue from the great statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome, became "the public representation of power . . . a symbol, embodying the dynastic ideal . . . the token of the legitimate right to rule. . . . When Duke Galeazzo Maria and his brother Lodovico Sforza conceived the idea of erecting an equestrian monument in Milan . . . it was with the intention of keeping their father before the mind's eye as founder of the dynasty and hence as progenitor of the city's rightful rulers."<sup>16</sup> Leonardo da Vinci was obliged to alter and eventually abandon his plans for the Sforza monument and its later incarnation, the Trivulzio monument,

p. 24. Quoted in Ernest W. Talbert, *The Problem of Order* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1962), p. 29.

13. Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 75-77. For the sources of this convention, see *The Aeneid* I, 124-227, and *The Iliad* XIII, 17-38.

14. Talbert, p. 28, cites the gloss to I Kings 12:9: "There is nothing harder for them that are in autoritie, then to bridle their affections, and followe good connsell." For the Smith reference, see Talbert, p. 37; for the Hooker reference, see Talbert, p. 60. Sidney's awareness of this political side of the metaphor, in addition to the psychological side mentioned earlier, is suggested by his use of Pugliano's claim, at the beginning of his *Apologie for Poetrie*, that "No earthly thing breeds such wonder to a prince as to be a good horseman"; see also *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford, 1947), VIII, 601; and Marvell's "Last Instructions to A Painter," ll. 213-16, 373-96.

15. Horst Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello* (Princeton, 1963), p. 158. For a general survey of such works, see Lida L. Fleitman, *The Horse in Art* (New York, 1931), and Lucien Paul Gabriele Guillot, *La Figure du Cheval* (Paris, 1927).

16. Ludwig H. Heydenreich, *Leonardo da Vinci* (London, 1954), p. 63. The equestrian statue of Napoleon at Naples was converted into a monument to Charles III under similar pressures. Virginia Bush, "Colossal Sculpture of the Cinquecento from Michelangelo to Giovanni Bologna," Diss. Columbia 1967, p. 166, also notes that "the Sforza statue . . . was intended as political, dynastic propaganda." Half a century later, in the early sixteenth century, when a second Cosimo de' Medici seized power in Venice, he tried to establish "the legitimacy of this rule through a program of dynastic propaganda," consisting largely of commissioned portrayals of himself and his ancestors (Bush, p. 181).



partly because forces opposing those families came to power and desired no such declaration of their enemies' dynastic rights. Similarly, the Venetian Senate felt compelled to resist construction of Verrocchio's equestrian Colleoni monument because it aroused "the specter of which every republic stood in constant fear—that of the Condottiere who seizes the reins of sovereignty."<sup>17</sup> Thus Donatello's Gattamelata monument "must be acknowledged as a daring thing indeed: here for the first time a nonsovereign receives an honor that had hitherto been claimed only by heads of state, be they emperors or local tyrants."<sup>18</sup> In fact, this exception tends to confirm the rule that equestrian portrayals imply an authority arising from regulation of the passions: the standard interpretation of this statue is that Donatello sought to portray a man entirely in control of himself, and therefore successful as a military leader.<sup>19</sup>

In the seventeenth century this sort of symbolism became an artistic commonplace, as in the equestrian portraits of Charles I by Van Dyck and of Philip IV by Velázquez. The rider's authority over his often wide-eyed and rearing mount symbolized the leader's masterful control and utilization of his army's or state's raw energies. Reining thus became analogous to, and symbolic of, reigning. This becomes an explicit

17. Janson, p. 160. Bush notes that "the equestrian statue was eminently suitable for celebrating military triumph and representing princely or even imperial status" (p. 171). That fact evidently invited a dangerous confusion of military authority with political authority and royal rank. An equestrian statue of George Washington caused the same sort of discomfort in the United States in the late eighteenth century.

18. Janson, p. 159.

19. Richard Cleary, in a letter received February 10, 1980, provided much of this information, and the following historical summary. Most Renaissance equestrian statuary, such as the late sixteenth-century statue of Cosimo I in Florence, looks backward to the Marcus Aurelius statue as a figuration of Roman absolutist rule. Such statuary may have been encouraged and subtly revised in the Renaissance to support emergent theories of sovereignty, according to Ulrich Keller, "Reitermonumente absolutistischer Fürsten, Staatstheoretische Voraussetzungen und politische Funktionen," in *Münchener Kunsthistorische Abhandlungen* 2 (1971). At least one seventeenth-century critic traces the metaphorical underpinnings of such statuary back to the Greeks. Francois Lemée, in his *Traité des Statues* (Paris, 1688), pp. 69–70, reports that

On prétend que les Grecs en ont mis les premiers [statues] à cheval, & dans les chars, pour marquer par la fierté, la vitesse & la force de cet animal, le courage extraordinaire avec lequel on avait vaincu dans les jeux, ou à la guerre, & mérité le triomphe. Aussi Darius étant déclaré Roy fit faire avant toutes choses sa statue equestre, avec cette inscription qu'il devoit la couronne à la vigueur de son cheval, & à l'adresse de son Ecuyer.

The wilder the mount, the greater the glory in subduing it. Bernini therefore attempted to portray Louis XIV atop a frenzied, rearing horse. Although this statue was not successfully executed—the problem of balance had defeated da Vinci among others—Falconet later achieved the effect in his monument to Peter the Great in Leningrad.

metaphor in *Measure for Measure*, where Claudio describes "the body public" as "A horse whereon the governor doth ride, / Who, newly in the seat, that it may know / He can command, lets it straight feel the spur" (1.2.159–62). The governor Claudio speaks of here is Angelo, whose repressive political leadership (like that of Coriolanus) seems to stem from his severe repressiveness towards his own passions and appetites. Even Macbeth's image of "Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself, / And falls on th' other" (1.7.27–28), uses the equestrian metaphor to show that Macbeth's overindulged desires will naturally propel him back off the throne by the same momentum that lifted him on. This piece of slapstick symbolism may have a source in Preston's *King Cambyses* (1569), where, in a Divine judgement on tyrannical lust and violence, Cambyses falls on his sword while trying to mount his horse.

*Richard II* begins with a forestalled duel that implicitly combines the political and psychological levels. A trial-by-joust assumes that the man who is morally superior and truly loyal to the king will be kept on his horse both by his inner integrity and by a God who protects the king's right to the royal saddle He gave. "Since we cannot atone you," King Richard tells the antagonists, "we shall see / Justice design the victor's chivalry" (1.1.202–03). A test of "chivalry," here very close to its etymological meaning of "horsemanship," actually tests both morality and politics, both private and public justice, simultaneously. Mowbray tells Richard,

First, the fair reverence of your Highness curbs me  
From giving reins and spurs to my free speech,  
Which else would post until it had return'd  
These terms of treason doubled down his throat. (1.1.54–57)

The two metaphors are here stacked one on top of the other, in the context of an actual equestrian combat. The king becomes the political sort of rider, whose dignified authority "curbs" Mowbray's behavior at court, forbidding him to indulge his anger against his fellow-lord and therefore obliging him to rein in the horse of his personal passions. In the following scene, the Duchess of Gloucester returns the favor, praying that Mowbray's moral failings will cause his public subjugation, again through the medium of actual horsemanship:

Be Mowbray's sins so heavy in his bosom  
That they may break his foaming courser's back  
And throw the rider headlong in the lists,  
A captive recreant to my cousin Herford! (1.2.50–53)

The portrayal of those who need to be ruled as horses nicely complements the portrayal of those capable of ruling as riders or charioteers. When the angry Fitzwater is challenged in the second set of duels, he replies, "How fondly dost thou spur a forward horse!" (4.1.72). His metaphor implies that he has surrendered his reining reason to the horse of his irascible appetite, which therefore needs no spurring. Similarly, the loyal Berkeley confronts Bolingbroke "to know what pricks you on" to his rebellion (2.3.78). This metaphor bolsters Berkeley's objections by equating Bolingbroke with a horse rather than a rider, with a creature propelled by some spurring personal or political motive over which he exercises no moral authority. The loyal York also casts the rebels in the role of unruly horses, pointing out that Richard would formerly have taken off Northumberland's head "For taking so the head" as to omit Richard's royal title (3.3.6-14). "Taking the head" is the equestrian term for a horse's running away with the reins. Richard himself implies the distinction between mount and master when he returns to England to confront the rebels and declares upon landing, "Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand, / Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs" (3.2.6-7). This hand-salute clearly resembles the ones he gave to the other equine symbol of the England he ruled, the roan Barbary: "This hand hath made him proud with clapping him" (5.5.86). So Richard portrays himself as the gentle master of the equine body-politic and perhaps simultaneously reduces the rebels by metonymy to horses running injuriously wild in England.

This manipulation of the political equestrian metaphor eventually backfires on Richard and his loyalists, with Bolingbroke atop the roan Barbary, and Richard, by his own admission, ridden like a horse by Bolingbroke. This transformation fittingly results from Richard's own domination by his unruly appetites and passions, which render him more horse than rider in the psychological version of the metaphor. His universally lamented lavishness, which necessitates the theft of Bolingbroke's inheritance, and his similarly unpopular attachment to his male minions, which may imply neglect of his childless queen, suggest two forms of unhealthy concupiscence. His futile or misdirected fits of violent anger, whether against Gaunt, the Irish, his councillors, Bolingbroke, his horse, or finally his murderer, resemble the impulses of Plato's horse of irascibility, alternately rash and royal. The loyalist York makes the unflattering comparison explicit, telling the Council, "The King is come. Deal mildly with his youth, / For young hot colts being rein'd do

rage the more" (2.1.69-70). Henry IV uses the same metaphor to warn about the unruly temper he expects Hal to bring to the throne. In Part One, Henry compares Hal to Richard as two examples of royalty who are dangerously compromised by indulging rather than regulating the lower classes and the lower passions. In Part Two, Henry warns Hal's brothers to treat Hal gently in anticipation of the day "when his headstrong riot hath no curb" (4.4.62). The two metaphors again work in tandem. Henry fears the day when Hal's political sovereignty, which will preclude anyone's reining him in, combines with his personal recklessness, which implies an inability to rein himself in. When he becomes Henry V, Hal himself uses this dual metaphor in warning the defenders of Harfleur not to compel him to loose his armies on the town: "What rein can hold licentious wickedness / When down the hill he holds his fierce career?" (3.3.22-23). The equestrian metaphor again incorporates both the inability of the king or general to restrain his troops and the inability of those troops to restrain themselves once the passions of bloodshed and rapine have been unleashed or at least unbridled.

As Shakespeare expands the significance of the sculptors' horseback-riding metaphor to include self-rule as well as political rule, so he extends Plato's chariot-driving metaphor to include the political as well as the personal. The *Phaedrus* compares the human soul to a winged chariot aspiring upward towards the virtue and knowledge of the gods; but the horse of bestial appetites, "if he has not been well broken in, drags his driver down by throwing all his weight in the direction of the earth."<sup>20</sup> This points back to the myth of Phaethon, whose intemperate seizure of the reins from his father, Phoebus, leads to his incineration as the solar chariot careens towards earth out of control. Renaissance writers occasionally politicized this myth by associating their kings with Phoebus and their rebels with his foolishly and disastrously usurping son—a natural extension of traditional sun-king imagery.<sup>21</sup> Twice in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, Clifford uses the Phaethon myth to lament or discredit rebellion (1.4.33-34; 2.6.11-13). On returning from Ireland, Richard II

20. Plato, *Phaedrus and the Seventh and Eighth Letters*, trans. Walter Hamilton, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1973), p. 52. This moral metaphor, and the related story of Phaethon, may partly explain the immature Ruggiero's failure to control his winged horse's flight in *Orlando Furioso*; see Giamatti, p. 293.

21. The same fears are expressed about the succession of Gorbuduc's sons, Ferrex and Porrex, through the same dual equestrian metaphor. Arostus endorses Gorbuduc's abdication, because it means that Gorbuduc will be alive to supervise the sons' reigns and "Shall bridle so their force of youthful heats" (1.2.114). The wiser Eubulus dissents:



tries to exploit this comparison, describing himself as the wayfaring enthroned sun—historically, Richard's heraldic emblem—whose return will doubtless shame Bolingbroke back into submission and banishment (3.2.36–53).<sup>22</sup> In the following scene, seeking to mollify the king, Bolingbroke unconsciously accepts his comparison:

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,  
As doth the blushing discontented sun  
From out the fiery portal of the east,  
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent  
To dim his glory and to stain the track  
Of his bright passage to the occident. (3.3.62–67)

But Richard's failures of self-rule have already deposed him from the solar chariot, and later in the scene he rightly dismisses Bolingbroke's simile as mere flattery. "Clouded" by a loss of popular support (3.2.68), Richard identifies himself with the failed charioteer Phaethon rather than the masterful Phoebus: "Down, down I come, like glist'ring Phaë-

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Arm not unskillfulness with princely power.  
But you, that long have wisely ruled the reins  
Of royalty within your noble realm,  
So hold them, while the gods for our avails  
Shall stretch the thread of your prolonged days.  
Too soon he clamb into the flaming car  
Whose want of skill did set the earth on fire. (1.2.325–31)

Henry's fear of the day when he dies and Hal's "headstrong riot hath no curb" is more specifically adumbrated in the words of Gorbuduc's other good advisor, Philander:

If Fates had taken you from earthly life  
Before beginning of this civil strife,  
Perhaps your sons in their unmastered youth,  
Loose from regard of any living wight,  
Would run on headlong with unbridled race  
To their own death and ruin of the realm. (3.1.108–13)

The dual metaphor, psychological and political, becomes even clearer in the Chorus' warning:

When youth not bridled with a guiding stay  
Is left to randon of their own delight  
And weld whole realms by force of sovereign sway,  
Great is the danger of unmastered might,  
Lest skillless rage throw down with headlong fall  
Their lands, their states, their lives, themselves and all. (2.2.83–88)

These quotations are based on the Regents Renaissance Drama Series edition of Sackville and Norton's *Gorbuduc*, ed. Irby B. Cauthen, Jr. (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1970).

ton, / Wanting the manage of unruly jades" (3.3.178–79). Richard, like Berkeley earlier, carefully avoids elevating Bolingbroke to the status of a rider; instead, Bolingbroke is part of the destructive equine force Richard has failed to control.

Bolingbroke appropriately advances towards the throne by demonstrating that he can steer a solar horse along its proper path. York bitterly describes the arrival of this new Phoebus:

the Duke, great Bolingbroke,  
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,  
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,  
With slow but stately pace kept on his course,  
Whilst all tongues cried, "God save thee, Bolingbroke!"  
(5.2.7–11)

The king is thrown; long ride the king. The horse Bolingbroke rides here reflects his burning ambitious appetites; but as he is able to modulate those appetites within himself (as, for example, by withholding himself until the ideal moment from the public adulation that seduced Richard), so is he able to regulate the actual horse and thus make a usefully impressive equestrian figure on his way to the throne. The act of self-bridling again contributes to the progress towards the royal saddle, again through the mediation of an actual feat of horsemanship. Bolingbroke legitimizes his uprising by a sort of sculptural self-portrait.<sup>23</sup>

22. Cf. George Herbert's "Affliction (IV)," in which he calls on God to cure his spiritual disorder "As the sunne scatters by his light / All the rebellions of the night." Talbert, pp. 171–72, points out that some Elizabethan versions of the Phaethon myth specified an equation between the horses of the sun and the common people; the ambitious were equated with the signs of the zodiac through which the chariot flees madly. Shakespeare portrays Macbeth's usurpation as a version of Phaethon's fatal error, through a pattern of action and imagery even more extensive (although less explicit) than in the second tetralogy. For an explication of this veiled Phaethon metaphor, see Robert N. Watson, "The Hazards of Adopted Identity in *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth* and *The Winter's Tale*," Diss. Stanford 1979, pp. 246–52.

23. An equestrian portrait of Henry IV apparently existed about the time Shakespeare was writing these plays; a 1610 equestrian portrait of Prince Henry is believed to be based on it. See David Livingstone-Learmonth, *The Horse in Art* (London, 1958), Plate Nine and the accompanying text. As this new Phoebus takes command of the mismanaged English chariot, the world moves, by Richard's own admission, "From Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day" (3.2.218). Throughout the deposition scene, this solar metaphor haunts Richard, who appears as a "shadow" (4.1.292–98). He wishes his successor "many years of sunshine days"; wishes himself "a mockery king of snow, / Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke, / To melt myself away in water-drops!"; and, staring in the mirror, demands, "Was this the face / That like the sun, did make beholders wink?" (4.1.221, 260–62, 283–84).

Bolingbroke completes his political usurpation by yet another usurpation of an equestrian role formerly reserved for Richard, yet another legitimizing display of masterful horsemanship. At his coronation he rides Richard's favorite mount, making the equation of equestrian and political control virtually explicit. Shakespeare apparently invented this incident, so it may well represent a deliberate culmination of the equestrian theme and not merely an imitation of historical fact. Richard's loyal groom complains,

O, how it ern'd my heart when I beheld  
In London streets, that coronation-day,  
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary,  
That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,  
That horse that I so carefully have dress'd!

RICHARD: Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,  
How went he under him?

GROOM: So proudly as if he disdain'd the ground.

RICHARD: So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back!  
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand,  
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.  
Would he not stumble? Would he not fall down,  
Since pride must have a fall, and break the neck  
Of that proud man that did usurp his back?  
Forgiveness, horse! why do I rail on thee,  
Since thou, created to be aw'd by man,  
Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse,  
And yet I bear a burthen like an ass,  
Spurr'd, gall'd, and tir'd by jauncing Bolingbroke. (5.5.76-94)

Richard here accuses the horse of the very sort of disloyalty York condemns in England as a whole a few scenes earlier, bestowing adulation and obedience on the new ruler to the disgrace of the former one, whom they had worshipped so recently (5.2.4-36). A horse once again symbolizes the characteristics of the body-politic that demand a ruler. Furthermore, Richard here asks the horse to do precisely what he had earlier asked the land itself to do: to rise up out of loyalty to him and gratitude for the salute of his royal hand and physically resist Bolingbroke's usurpation (3.2.6-7).<sup>24</sup> By the end of the speech, however, Richard forgives the horse, because he recognizes what the correlation

24. This may be an allusion to Alexander the Great's horse Bucephalus, who was commonly associated with his master's conquests and would tolerate no other rider.

between the two sorts of usurpation finally implies. He perceives that the usurpation of the actual horse is only the appropriate physical manifestation of the fact that Bolingbroke has become the figurative rider, and Richard the figurative horse, in England's political hierarchy. The political intemperance that rendered Richard a "young hot colt" in York's analogy (2.1.70) has simply achieved its natural consequence: he is subjugated, and Bolingbroke's mastery of his horse is a fitting emblem of that subjugation.

The counter-rebellion that threatens Henry's reign in *1 Henry IV* commences with odd timing and odd phrasings that may subtly suggest another suicidal effort to usurp Phoebus' chariot. Glendower promises that his daughter's song will lull the rebels

'twixt wake and sleep  
As is the difference betwixt day and night  
The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team  
Begins his golden progress in the east.

MORTIMER: With all my heart I'll sit and hear her sing.  
By that time will our book, I think, be drawn. (3.1.216-21)

The clearest stated antecedent for "that time" is the hour of dawn, a notion bolstered by Mortimer's earlier description of the indentures as "(A business that this night may execute)," allowing the rebels to embark "To-morrow" (3.1.81-82). As the song ends and dawn approaches, the connections between the preparations of the solar chariot and the preparations to seize political control of England become clearer, although never explicit. Glendower, who bragged earlier in the scene that his birth had filled the heavens with a disordered fire which threatened the earth, launches the rebellion by observing that "hot Lord Percy is on fire to go. / By this our book is drawn, we'll but seal, / And then to horse immediately" (3.1.264-66). The rebels mount their horses in hopeful (if perhaps unconscious) imitation of the rising sun, implicitly seeking to claim authority over the royal solar chariot.

England is waiting uneasily for news about this rebellion's fate as *2 Henry IV* begins. Fittingly, the Induction portrays this uncertainty by allowing Rumor to place himself metaphorically in Phoebus' solar chariot: "I, from the orient to the drooping west / (Making the wind my post-horse), still unfold / The acts commenced on this ball of earth" (3-5). All rumors center on the identity of England's ruler, and rumors of Henry or rumors of Hotspur alternately occupy the saddle. The sixty lines following the Induction suggest a bewildering flurry of horsemen



arriving, passing one another, exchanging or stealing horses, and presenting contradictory reports about the rebellion's outcome.<sup>25</sup> Northumberland comments that "The times are wild, contention, like a horse / Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose, / And bears down all before him" (1.1.9-11). In breaking wildly free from its tether, this horse represents two linked phenomena: the state, which lacks the clear control of any horseman and runs dangerously at liberty, and the passionate anger which, in breaking from the normal bounds of civil behavior, is both cause and effect of the unresolved political conflict.

Hal's "noble horsemanship" in *1Henry IV* (4.1.110) tames these wild horses of anger and rumor by defeating Hotspur, whose very name suggests furious horsemanship. The causes of Hotspur's defeat, suggested throughout the play, reinforce the symbolic pattern I have been proposing. Hotspur seems in many ways an ideal candidate for equestrian authority: he combines the charismatic leadership, the martial strength, the instinct for dominance and honor, and perhaps even a filament of the royal lineage that traditionally characterize rightful and effective kings, and the subjects of equestrian statuary. Lady Percy associates these very qualities with both the role of Phoebus and leadership of England, recalling that Hotspur's honor "stuck upon him as the sun / In the grey vault of heaven, and by his light / Did all the chevalry of England move / To do brave acts" (2*H4* 2.3.18-21).

In the *Henry IV* plays, however, the Platonic side of the equestrian metaphor is much more intricately alive than in *Richard II*, and Hotspur's failings in Platonic terms subjugate him to Hal's "noble horsemanship" despite his chivalric qualities. Hotspur resembles Plato's horses much more than his rider. On the one hand, he corresponds to the nobler horse in being "upright" and "a friend of genuine renown." But one could hardly say of Hotspur what Plato says of this horse, that "his thirst for honour is tempered by restraint and modesty." In fact, Hotspur's excess of this potentially noble irascibility often likens him to the ignoble horse of concupiscence, who "bursts into angry abuse, reproaching the driver and his fellow horse for their cowardice and lack of spirit in running

25. Lord Bardolph dismisses the messenger who brings bad news to Northumberland here as "some hilding fellow that hath stol'n / The horse he rode on" (1.1.57-58). Bardolph's accusation may be framed so that it underscores his contention that the verbal awarding of England's throne to Henry itself constitutes a sort of equestrian robbery. Clearly Bardolph is projecting his distrust of the message back into the means by which the message was brought, and the projection is symbolically appropriate to the subject under dispute.

away and breaking their word"—much as Hotspur does when his promised allies lack the courage to appear for the battles.<sup>26</sup> It has been generally recognized that Hotspur is finally overthrown primarily by his own fiery wrath, which, uncontrolled, alienates his badly needed allies and precipitates a battle before his army—and specifically his horses (4.3.19-24)—get a badly needed rest. What has not been recognized is the pattern that again moralizes the situation by making equestrian abilities a mediating symbol between psychological and political control. Hotspur's horsemanship fails—and therefore his assault on the throne fails also—because of a failure of self-control.

Shakespeare twice implies deficiencies in Hotspur's control of actual horses, deficiencies that reflect his poor control of his passions and justify his exclusion from control of the state. Hotspur selects a horse to ride on his rebellious journey and declares, "That roan shall be my throne" (2.3.70)—much as Richard's roan Barbary became the figuration of his throne. Lady Percy intercepts her husband's impetuous departure and asks,

What is it carries you away?

HOTSPUR: Why, my horse, my love, my horse.

LADY PERCY: Out, you mad-headed ape!

A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen

As you are toss'd with. (2.3.75-79)

His answer, taken metaphorically, is more accurate than he realizes. Lady Percy implies that his horse is only the embodiment of the mad-headed spleen which is actually what carries him away, a notion all the more plausible to us since we know the real reason for his departure. He is carried away by his mad-headed spleen so often, in fact, that his rebellion fails, as rightly it should for the future sound government of England.

Hotspur therefore loses his battle for the crown, a battle which Shakespeare presents verbally as an equestrian combat, an unhorsing contest. The on-stage battle takes place on foot, as practical stage conventions dictated, but the very fact that Shakespeare was willing to endure such an inconsistency suggests that the equestrian image was important to him here:

26. Plato, pp. 61-62; *IH4* 2.3.1-35.

HOTSPUR: Come, let me taste my horse,  
 Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt  
 Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales.  
 Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,  
 Meet and ne'er part till one drop down a corse. (4.1.119-23)

A thunderbolt was the weapon Zeus used to destroy Phaethon, in order to save the earth from incineration by the mismanaged solar chariot. The meeting at Shrewsbury may therefore become a test of whether Hotspur can destroy the Phaethon-like Hal he perceives—a failed ruler and a disobedient son—and trap Hal permanently in that role by an unredeemed early death, or alternatively whether Hal can master the role of Phoebus which his soliloquy evokes (1.2.197-203) and destroy Hotspur in his role as the headlong fiery usurper Phaethon.

Clearly Prince Hal is the rightful opponent in this test of horsemanship, the proper competitor for control of the “hot horses” of England’s solar chariot. Hal’s rule will combine Richard’s claim to the throne, based on inheritance and signified by solar imagery, with Henry’s claim to the throne, based on superior discipline and skill, and signified by actual equestrian mastery. Hal therefore appears both as Phoebus and as a skilled earthly rider. The description of Hal’s preparations to confront Hotspur “hot horse to horse” grants Hal both literal equestrian mastery and a symbolic conversion into a god-like solar horseman. Hal’s army, Vernon reports, appears

gorgeous as the sun at midsummer;  
 Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.  
 I saw young Harry with his beaver on,  
 His cushes on his thighs, gallantly arm’d  
 Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,  
 And vaulted with such ease into his seat  
 As if an angel [dropp’d] down from the clouds  
 To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,  
 And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

HOTSPUR: No more, no more! worse than the sun in March,  
 This praise doth nourish agues. Let them come! (4.1.102-12)

This solar figure is in full command of both the wanton goats and the wild bulls beneath him which, either as houses of the solar zodiac or as their animal earthly counterparts, correspond to the concupiscent and irascible appetites that the less-stable lunar figure of Hotspur cannot

regulate.<sup>27</sup> What will eventually bewitch the world about young Harry, of course, is his noble leadership and statesmanship, for which his horsemanship is the appropriate symbol, and perhaps the predictive test.

The connections between Hal’s and Richard’s roles as versions of the royal Phoebus become much clearer in Hal’s famous soliloquy:

I know you all, and will a while uphold  
 The unyok’d humor of your idleness,  
 Yet herein will I imitate the sun,  
 Who doth permit the base contagious clouds  
 To smother up his beauty from 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. (1.2.195-203)

This clearly resembles the strategy that Richard hoped to employ against Bolingbroke, returning as Phoebus to scare away the clouds, the unruly forces that threatened to dim his glory. But Hal characteristically makes Richard’s folly his own policy. Where Richard fails, falling into the role of the overly willful and incompetent son Phaethon at his deposition, Hal successfully feigns such unruliness and royal incompetence, then reasserts his filial loyalty and his skill as a ruler decisively at his accession. In 2 *Henry IV*, King Henry worries that the Eastcheap Hal is too much like the “colt” Richard to bring “these rebels, now afoot, . . . underneath the yoke of government” (4.4.9-10), and that the crown-stealing Hal is too much like the disobedient Phaethon to take over successfully now that his father’s “day is dim” (4.5.100). But the unbridled appetites of Eastcheap, like the English rebels, will not long remain “unyok’d.” Instead Hal will compel them to help pull his renewed solar chariot into view: his coronation will be all the more glorious because it entails the subjugation of the pampered jades of Eastcheap. Hal is finally a masterful manipulator of equestrian symbols, as his father is, rather than a colt; he has merely been awaiting the most striking moment to “throw off” his “loose

27. The proposal of Pegasus, traditionally the horse of poetry, as Hal’s mount calls to mind the mastery of language by which Hal secures the loyalty of England’s tavern people *IH4* 2.4.3-21) and later establishes sovereignty over the Welsh, Scots, Irish, and even the French in *Henry V*. Hotspur, in contrast, is known by many and mocked by Hal as a graceless speaker; in riding this Pegasus, Hal again proves the better horseman, although Hotspur has his own poetic touch and would not begrudge Hal his implicit control over the “shuffling nag” of “mincing poetry” (3.1.132-33).



behavior," as his soliloquy promises (1.2.208), and become rider rather than ridden.<sup>28</sup>

Shakespeare prepares us to recognize the Phoebus allusion in Hal's soliloquy by showing Falstaff, earlier in the same scene, unwittingly and characteristically contributing to his own symbolic exploitation by Hal. He begs Hal, "when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be call'd thieves of the day's beauty" merely because these "minions of the moon" perform their robberies "by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phoebus, he, 'that wand'ring knight so fair'" (1*H4* 1.2.23–25, 14–16). These moonlight robberies are implicitly if incongruously associated with Hotspur's determination to "pluck bright honor from the pale-fac'd moon" (1.3.202)—one of several indications that, as Hal promised his father, Hotspur can be obliged to "exchange / His glorious deeds for my indignities" (3.2.145–46), leaving Hotspur with the dark taint of lunatic appetites, and Hal with Hotspur's former solar glory. When Hal springs up onto his horse with a radiance that dazzles Vernon, the cloudy thieves of the day's beauty have inadvertently become servants of that beauty, yoked into providing a context that renders Hal's horsemanship and kingship all the more impressive. The enemies of the state's order and dignity are broken to the service of that order and dignity, unwillingly fighting that state's rebels and bolstering the credibility of its new monarch.

Falstaff is the most pampered of these jades, and the most prominent victim of Hal's triumphant transformation. If Hotspur corresponds to Plato's horse of the irascible appetite, then Falstaff corresponds to the less-noble horse of concupiscent appetite. Hal thus attains his glory by subduing and yoking both of these unruly forces—the rebel of the sword and the rebel of the flesh—as Plato argues the rational soul must. Plato's ignoble horse is "crooked, lumbering, ill-made, stiff-necked, short-throated, snub-nosed; his coat is black and his eyes a bloodshot grey; wantonness and boastfulness are his companions, and he is hairy-eared and deaf, hardly controllable even with whip and goad."<sup>29</sup> The resem-

28. Pistol, surely one of these jades, himself speaks of "pamper'd jades of Asia," echoing the famous speech in which Marlowe's Tamburlaine establishes his political sovereignty by compelling other kings to take the role of horses in pulling his chariot (2*H4* 2.4.164; *Tamburlaine, Part Two*, 4.3.1). Later in the scene Tamburlaine compares this chariot to that of Phoebus, declaring he will "ride in golden armour like the sun . . . in my coach, like Saturn's royal son / Mounted his shining chariot gilt with fire" (4.3.115, 125–26). Shakespeare reminds us of Hal's solar transformation in *Henry V*, 1.2.276–80.

29. Plato, p. 62.

blance to the overweight, shabby, alcoholic Falstaff, accompanied by lascivious and bragging companions and declaring himself deaf to the Lord Chief Justice and his threats of punishment, may not be intentional, but it is unmistakable. His relegation to the role of horse rather than rider results, by a sort of symbolic justice, from his moral flaws.

The emergence of Hal's equestrian skills and Falstaff's equine traits is punctuated by Hal's two actual "uncoltings" of Falstaff, which are performed and discussed in a way that ought to serve to warn Falstaff of the connection between self-control and eligibility for public authority. When Falstaff is obliged to carry the weight of his gluttonous sins up Gadshill, he has not been exactly "colted" (cheated) as he claims, but rather all too justly "uncolted" as Hal replies. The panting Falstaff's rejoinder is a plea: "I prithee, good prince—Hal!—help me to my horse, good king's son." Hal answers, "Out, ye rogue! shall I be your ostler?" (1*H4* 2.2.38–42). Falstaff has in fact been asking Hal to be his ostler all along—that is, to be the one who helps him into the seat of royal power, which sloth and his weightier sins make him incapable of doing for himself. In this small dispute about the horse, Hal gives Falstaff another hint that he has no intention of letting his royalty be used to hoist Falstaff into authority, not at least until Falstaff has shown he can physically and morally elevate himself by disciplining his own appetites.<sup>30</sup>

I have mentioned the way Richard and his loyalist Berkeley emphasize Bolingbroke's ineligibility to rule by comparing him to a horse rather than a rider, and the way Richard and Hal, when their unchecked passions compromise their royal qualities, are similarly compared to horses. As Falstaff fabricates his version of the Gadshill incident, he urges Hal, "if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse" (2.4.193–94; see also 3.3.9). By the end of the scene, both Hal and Peto have obliged the latter half of their lying companion's request. After Hal turns away the sheriff who had come to arrest Falstaff, Peto finds the fat knight where

30. When Poinc first plans the Gadshill robbery-of-the-robbers (a trick not unlike the Percies' effort to usurp the crown from their former fellow-usurper), Hal warns that Falstaff will recognize them by their horses (1.2.174–75). Hal agrees to participate in this double theft of the royal treasury only when Poinc proposes that they hide their horses—by analogy, Hal's royal persona—out of sight and perform the attack on foot. Falstaff later claims to have recognized Hal anyway, by some indefinable royal quality that shone through his disguise, a claim that is universally mocked. The prank thus implicitly links Hal's equestrian persona and his princely persona as two aspects of his identity deliberately and simultaneously sequestered from the criminal activities and invisible to Falstaff.

they hid him, "Fast asleep behind the arras, and snorting like a horse." Hal immediately searches Falstaff's pockets, finding the reckonings that chart Falstaff's descent into his equine state and declaring his determination to "procure this fat rogue a charge of foot" instead of one of cavalry (2.4.528-29, 545-46). Once again, Hal's decision to deny Falstaff the comfortable saddle he desires represents both a direct response to Falstaff's incapacitating overindulgences and a foreshadowing of Hal's eventual decision to deny such a moral weakling the equestrian role of government.<sup>31</sup>

If Falstaff's "uncoltings" were primarily a device for glossing over (however playfully) the fact that horses could not be brought on stage, Shakespeare probably would not want to remind us repeatedly of his highly contrived solution. But he does remind us repeatedly of these uncoltings, presumably because they keep the argument between Hal and Falstaff about Falstaff's future at court symbolically active through the middle of *1 Henry IV*:

HAL: I have procur'd thee, Jack, a charge of foot.

FALSTAFF: I would it had been of horse. (3.3. 186-87)

Such an exchange is essentially the extension by other means of the battle indirectly but bitterly fought in the play-acting scene in the tavern (2.4.397-485). Shakespeare and Hal may well have been inspired to these uncoltings by the humor Falstaff's struggles to walk doubtless entailed. But that humor also serves the symbolic pattern: we laugh largely because Falstaff's struggles to walk and climb are so fitting a commentary on, and chastisement of, his unbridled fleshly indulgences. Even this slapstick aspect of the uncoltings reminds us of the connection between Falstaff's excessive appetites and his eventual rejection by Hal.

Some muffled echoes of the Phoebus symbolism, in turn, remind us why Hal must banish these bad horsemen from his solar chariot. The Eastcheap characters compromise Hal's solar radiance, whether as "min-

31. Walter Kaiser, *Praisers of Folly* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 210-13, points out striking similarities between Falstaff's conduct and that proposed for Erasmus' Harpalus. Since a knight was originally a horseman by definition—*equus* is the Latin term for both, and a look at a chess set will confirm the association—it is oxymoronic for Sir John, as for Harpalus, to become "literally a horseless knight" (p. 226). The incongruity, in both cases, suggests that the outward marker of traditional knightliness has been removed because the men lack the inward nobility that knighthood was supposed to connote. Cf. Levin, p. 128. Kaiser's argument that Falstaff "is all for love" and therefore the counterpart of Hotspur, who "is all for war" (p. 225), supports my theory that the two men correspond closely to Plato's horses of concupiscence and irascibility.

ions of the moon," as the clouds Hal envisages in front of his sun in his famous soliloquy, or as Hal's "shadow," the term Poins uses to describe himself (2*H4* 2.2.159). When Falstaff does acquire some shred of royal authority to abuse later in the play, in the form of military impressment, he abuses it while making a series of puns about the relationship between "son" and "shadow" (3.2.121-35). These puns, which provide so suitable an accompaniment to Falstaff's tarnishing of Hal's delegated royal authority, appropriately echo the puns on "son" and "sun" Falstaff makes while playing the role of King Henry in the tavern and comparing the influence of Hal's Eastcheap companions to the darkening influence of pitch (1*H4* 2.4.405-14). After the abortive battle, when Falstaff again tries to claim part of the royal family's triumph for himself, he claims it in terms of mounting and celestial radiance, royal symbols which Prince John insists are forbidden Falstaff by his failures of self-rule:

FALSTAFF: [Unless] I in the clear sky of fame o'er shine you as much as the full moon doth the cinders of the element (which show like pins' heads to her), believe not the word of the noble. Therefore let me have right, and let desert mount.

PRINCE JOHN: Thine's too heavy to mount.

FALSTAFF: Let it shine then.

PRINCE JOHN: Thine's too thick to shine. (2*H4* 4.3.51-58).

Shakespeare thus shows Falstaff's aspirations to equestrian royalty rightly foiled by the unbridled concupiscent appetites that have made him heavy and thick, as surely as the royal thoughts of Richard II and Hotspur were crushed by their own characteristic excesses. Hiram Haydn suggests that Hal, Hotspur, and Falstaff correspond, in their divergent attitudes towards manly honor, to the three aspects of man described in Plato's *Republic*: reason, anger, and desire, respectively.<sup>32</sup> Hal has often been accused of being overly calculating; but anger and desire are dangerous horses, according to the *Phaedrus* metaphor, and reason's task is to control them. Hal's explicit or implicit unhorsing of the rebels representing these forces symbolically mediates between the moral cause and the political consequences of their defeat, between the Platonic metaphor and the metaphor of equestrian statuary.

No physical rush to horseback can overcome the laws of this symbolic pattern, although the various unworthy aspirants to power seem to

32. *The Counter-Renaissance* (New York, 1950), p. 600; cited by Kaiser, p. 233.



imagine that it can. Throughout the tetralogy, the rebels' assaults on the throne begin as frantic mountings of horses, as if the mounting itself were the natural first step towards the royal equestrian role (e.g., *Richard II*, 2.1.298–300, *1H4* 3.1.266). But the moral or psychological side of the metaphor clings tenaciously to the political side; as Baret's riding manual argues, without the inward spiritual basis, outward displays of horsemanship are doomed. In *2 Henry IV*, as he waits impatiently for Hal to inherit power, Falstaff periodically sends one of his Eastcheap companions to buy him a horse (1.2.50–51) or goes himself to buy a saddle (2.1.26–27). When Henry IV dies, Falstaff rushes to horse with the same alacrity as the rebels and promptly links his ascension onto horseback with an ascension into political authority: "Away, Bardolph! saddle my horse. Master Robert Shallow, choose what office thou wilt in the land, 'tis thine" (5.3.122–24). The connection reappears a few lines later: "Let us take any man's horses, the laws of England are at my commandment" (5.3.135–37). The association of an equestrian theft with a political coup makes practical sense in both cases, but it also helps us connect these two sorts of illegitimate authority that Falstaff pursues so avidly and Hal denies him with such symbolic aptness.

To the extent that Hotspur and Falstaff do perceive a connection between passionate appetites and horsemanship, they invert the proper relationship. Where the tetralogy's metaphor equates horsemanship with the regulation of illegitimate political and sexual impulses, Hotspur and Falstaff seem to equate horsemanship with the indulgence of such impulses. Hotspur's imbalance is away from the concupiscent and towards the irascible: his horse and his equestrian feats (as Hal's mockery at *1 Henry IV* 2.4.101–08 suggests) always take precedence over his wife, to the point of becoming sexual surrogates. Lady Percy complains that, during the fortnight Hotspur has been planning his rebellion, she has been "A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed" (2.3.39); and when she pleads for a confirmation of love from her departing husband, he flirtingly replies, "Come, wilt thou see me ride? / And when I am a' horseback, I will swear / I love thee infinitely" (2.3.100–02). Hotspur seems to be referring playfully to the notion that men will swear infinite love only in the heat of sexual inspiration, using the common metaphor of riding for sexual intercourse;<sup>33</sup> but Hotspur will be deriving this inspiration from a

33. Giamatti, p. 302, discusses "the identification between sexual activity and riding, hinted at humorously elsewhere (8.49–50, 28.64) [which] is made serious and explicit" in Canto 29 of

literal, not metaphorical, act of horsemanship. In any case, his oath of love to his wife must await and subserve the beginning of his rebellious journey to Shrewsbury.

Falstaff and his Eastcheap companions, in contrast, aim to win control of the English throne by seduction rather than rape; and they seek reputation and political power only as means towards greater sensual indulgences. Gadshill boasts that the Eastcheap gang are England's masters, "for they ride up and down on her, and make her their boots," implying both sexual and political predation (*1H4* 2.1.81–82). Falstaff speaks of his ambition to "ride the mare, if I have any vantage of ground to get up" (*2H4* 2.1.78–79), which may be at once a sexual pun about his predatory use of such "common roads" as Doll Tearsheet (2.2.166–68) and an extension of the political metaphor describing his parasitical use of Hal. I have quoted Falstaff's yearning for "a charge of horse" instead of the "charge of foot" Hal aptly assigns him. Helge Kökeritz suggests that Elizabethan pronunciation would have made Falstaff's phrase a pun on "a charge of whores."<sup>34</sup> Thus, all too typically, Falstaff wants to convert his one limited position of public responsibility into a position of unlimited sexual debauchery. He is truly what Hal calls him punningly in the tavern: a "horse-back-breaker" (*1H4* 2.4.242–43) whose unhealthy horsemanship and unhealthy sexual activities are merely different facets of the same ponderous concupiscence. So Hotspur and Falstaff commit reciprocal versions of the same essential error, confusing horsemanship with the violent and unbalanced appetites that rightly undermine it.

*Henry V* shows Hal characteristically mediating these two errors, neither repressing the rightful sexuality of marriage nor allowing illegitimate sexuality to jeopardize his moral stature or his political conquests. In the Dolphin of France Shakespeare condenses the basic equestrian errors of both Hotspur and Falstaff, to highlight Hal's triumph. On the one hand, the Dolphin announces that "my horse is my mistress" and describes his mount in terms befitting a Renaissance love-sonneteer, as Orleance points out (3.7.11–44); for the Dolphin as for Hotspur, dreams of soaring to celestial glory in chivalric combat have wrongly encroached on the realm of human love. On the other hand, the Dolphin leads his lords in bantering comparisons between equestrian and sexual

*Orlando Furioso*, when Orlando furiously rides Angelica's horse to its death and thus again reveals himself as a sort of unchecked horse through his excessive and unbridled passion (cf. Giamatti, p. 300). See also *The Duchess of Malfi*, 1.1.85–88.

34. *Shakespeare's Pronunciation* (New Haven, Conn., 1953), pp. 59–60.

mounting which, like Falstaff's puns, degrade the ongoing martial preparations into an extension of their dehumanized sexual affairs (3.7.45-68).

Hal's courtship of Katherine, in contrast, represents not the confusion but rather the perfect coordination of horsemanship's various implications. Their marriage, in both its sexual and political aspects, is an equestrian ideal, because it reinforces the proper psychological and political control of otherwise unruly forces: the sexual rebel in one's own flesh and the political rebel in the nation. Hal's marriage to Katherine provides badly needed legitimacy to both his sexual and political aggression; winning her hand both symbolizes and assures Hal's winning of France, which he assures her he loves "so well that I will not part with a village of it" (5.2.173-74). So, while his rivals muddle horses and mistresses, Hal treats horsemanship as simply a helpful analogy in advancing a politically helpful courtship:

If I could win a lady at leap-frog, or by vaulting into my saddle with my armor on my back, under the correction of bragging be it spoken, I should quickly leap into a wife. Or if I might buffet for my love, or bound my horse for her favors, I could lay on like a butcher, and sit like a jack-an-apes, never off. (5. 2.136-42)

This version of Macbeth's "Vaulting ambition," because its performer has a better moral footing and a better comprehension of his deed's implications, provides him with a more stable position in the royal saddle.

The Dolphin, like Richard, Hotspur, and Falstaff, is forbidden to conquer and rule England by what Shakespeare describes as a literal unhorsing that reflects his failure to bridle his predominant passion—in this case, vanity. The failure to curb one's characteristic appetite again serves as both a practical and a symbolic cause of an actual unhorsing and a consequent elimination from political power. Shakespeare reshapes history to suggest that the French invited their defeat at Agincourt through the proud overconfidence the Dolphin typifies, much as *1 Henry IV* attributes the rebels' defeat to Hotspur's irascibility and vainglory. The Dolphin's vanity, furthermore, is focused obsessively, almost exclusively, on his horse (3.7.1-44). His horse is his pride, both in the sense that it is his greatest source of pride and in the sense that it symbolizes the pride which runs away with this final inadequate rider of the tetralogy. In *The Merchant of Venice* Portia complains that the Neapolitan prince is himself "a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse" (1.2.40-41). The Dolphin similarly qualifies only for the horse-role of

subject, rather than the rider-role of sovereign, because he submits to the psychological hobby-horse he should be subduing. The terms in which he describes his horse aptly confuse the beast with its supposedly royal rider: "It is the prince of palfreys: his neigh is like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces homage" (3.7.27-29). This could be a description of the Dolphin's faults as easily as a description of the horse's virtues. He calls his mount "a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for a sovereign's sovereign to ride on" (3.7.35-37); but his wild boasts reveal that he has subjugated his reason to the prevailing passion of vanity.

Like the other foolish Phaethon-like figures of the tetralogy, the French mount their horses at dawn in confident imitation of the rising sun:

ORLEANCE: The sun doth gild our armor, up, my lords!

DOLPHIN: *Montez[à] cheval!* My horse, varlot lackey! (4.2. 1-2)

But when they try to assure such sovereignty in battle, their pride takes the form of the ornamented horses they had boasted about, and strikes back both literally and figuratively to destroy them. The French herald Montjoy—whose name may be ironic as well as historical, considering the news he brings of his lords' mounts—reports that their

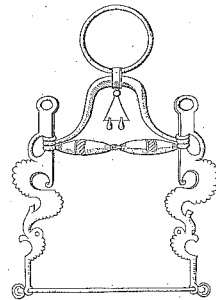
wounded steeds  
Fret fetlock deep in gore, and with wild rage  
Yerk out their armed heels at their dead masters,  
Killing them twice. (4.7.78-81)

The wildness of the horses destroys those who aspire to political sovereignty before achieving sovereignty over their own predominant humors. An actual equestrian disaster again mediates perfectly between a psychological excess and a political unseating.

In the second tetralogy, then, Shakespeare turns his awkward obligation to portray horsemanship without physically presenting horses into an opportunity to expand and refine the tetralogy's thematic concerns: the nature of self-rule, the right to political rule, and the connection between the two. Had the horses been present, there would have been far less opportunity to describe them and their riders significantly. The need for legitimate and authoritative leadership, and the uncertainty about who would provide it, were at their most severe during the period these plays depict. So Shakespeare keeps the dangerous wild energies of the horses constantly in our minds, but only through verbal references, leaving characters and audience alike with crucial doubts, until near the

end of each play, about who will gain the saddle and prove capable of managing the reins. The outcome of the struggle in each play reinforces the notion, based on a conflation of the equestrian metaphors explicit in the *Phaedrus* and implicit in Renaissance art, that the sovereign is ideally and perhaps inevitably the good horseman who masters his own unruly passions before trying to master those of the equine body-politic.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



ZAILIG POLLOCK

“*The Object, and the Wit*”: *The Smell of Donne’s*  
First Anniversary

But, of the diseases of the mind there is no criterion, no canon, no rule, for our own taste and apprehension and interpretation should be the judge, and that is the disease itself.<sup>1</sup>

THE problem of Donne’s *First Anniversary*, *An Anatomy of the World*, is a problem of decorum. Much of the scholarship devoted to the *Anniversaries* over the last thirty years has been an attempt to solve this problem which has troubled Donne’s readers from the first appearance of the poems to our own day. This scholarship assumes that it is possible to reconstruct the rules of decorum underlying the *Anniversaries*, and that once this is done both poems will be seen as unproblematic (although brilliant and perhaps somewhat excessive) performances in a traditional literary-religious-philosophical mode.<sup>2</sup> The comments of the most recent editor of the *Anniversaries*, W. Milgate, are typical of this approach. According to Milgate, the *Anatomy* is “neither surprising nor confusing if we locate [Donne’s] practise in . . . [a] tradition of symbolism with which he was deeply familiar”;<sup>3</sup> “[i]t

1. Cited by John Carey, *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (New York, 1981), p. 126 from *The Life and Letters of John Donne*, ed. Edmund Gosse (London, 1899), I, 184.

2. For a survey of discussions of the *Anniversaries* see Barbara K. Lewalski, *Donne’s “Anniversaries” and the Poetry of Praise: The Creation of a Symbolic Mode* (Princeton, N.J., 1973), pp. 108–11. In addition to Lewalski’s book, the most ambitious investigations of the rules of decorum underlying the *Anniversaries* are Louis L. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation* (New Haven, Conn., 1954), Chap. 6 (still one of the best accounts of the *Anniversaries*); O. B. Hardison, Jr., *The Enduring Monument* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1962), Chap. 7; and Frank Manley’s Introduction to his edition of the *Anniversaries* (Baltimore, Md., 1963).

3. *The Epithalamions Anniversaries and Epicedes* (Oxford, 1978), p. xxxv.